



# MARTIAL WORLD

BOOK 03

*Cocooned Cow*

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

# Martial World

(Wuji Tianxia)

(武极天下)

by

Cocooned Cow

(蚕茧里的牛)

# Synopsis

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In the Realm of the Gods, countless legends fought over a mysterious cube. However, after the battle it disappeared into the void. Lin Ming stumbles upon this mysterious cube and begins his journey to become the hero of the land.

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English Translation by Hyorinmaru @ [Wuxia World](#)

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## Chapter 201 – Nest Cavern

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The black-clothed martial artist ruefully smiled and said, “I want to, but I would have to have the strength for the job. This kind of treasure might not be protected by just two Thunder Lizards. It might even possibly be a small Thunder Lizard tribal group. If I do go, I fear I would already be dead before I even arrived.”

“Even if I arrive safely, and have the luck to not encounter any Thunder Lizards, the rare thunder-attribute treasure is not something that I can meddle with. It contains a very potent power of thunder. Let alone a valuable thunder attribute material, I can’t even pick 500 year old Thundergrass. If I accidentally touch the leaves, then I would follow the same fate as my junior-apprentice brother.”

The black-clothed martial artist glanced at the Altering Muscle youth who was lying unconscious on the ground.

Lin Ming said, “Whether your guess is correct or not, the information you told me is very valuable. Speak up, what sort of reward do you want?”

The black-clothed martial artist was delighted; he had spoken up with this end goal in mind. If the other party eats the meat, it’s fine even if he was just given a little bit of soup. He hesitated and said truthfully, “I don’t know if there really is a treasure, so it’s a bit hasty to talk about rewards. It’s just...Senior; could you please save my junior-apprentice brother first? If he’s left in this state any longer, he might remain disabled for his entire life...”

The black-clothed martial artist spoke with some difficulty. Since he didn't know how old Lin Ming was, or maybe even that Lin Ming was some old monster, he might have heard him and his junior-apprentice brother's conversation. He could only hope that this mighty elder wasn't someone who would keep such small things in his heart.

Sure enough, Lin Ming said, "No problem."

Towards the trivial little guy lying on the floor, Lin Ming didn't really bother to care about him.

He pulled out a vial of pills from his spatial ring and walked over to the twin girl's side.

Over half of the youth's body was charred. After he probed the youth with his soul force, Lin Ming discovered that there was still a very oppressive power of thunder that remained in his body. The reason the youth was so gravely wounded was because of the continued ravaging of this thunder.

Lin Ming grabbed onto the youth's hand. Using his Thunder Soul, he was easily able to drain the power of thunder out from the youth, and absorb it all into the Thunder Soul.

Then, he took out a pill from the vial in his hand and shoved it into the youth's mouth.

Although the twin sisters didn't know what sort of medicine Lin

Ming had fed their second senior-apprentice brother, they only had to see how the pill sparked with light while emitting a rich fragrance to guess that this pill was definitely an expensive miracle medicine.

It was said that a high-level miracle medicine was commonly worth thousands of gold taels. There were even pills that could directly enhance a martial artist's cultivation that cost tens of thousands of gold taels.

If they could obtain such a pill, then the two sisters wouldn't have to suffer such hardship in their struggle to reach the Altering Muscle stage. Thinking of this, the two sister's eyes heated up with a little bit of envy.

The power of thunder had already been removed by Lin Ming. Together with the quick efficacy of the pill, the unconscious youth coughed and woke up. He looked around in a daze. The heavy attack he had received caused him to forget what had happened to him.

"Good," Lin Ming stood up and said to the black-clothed martial artist, "Let's go."

"Mm. Thank you Senior." The black-clothed martial artist wanted to leave the twin sisters behind to look after Second Junior-apprentice Brother, but, he was worried about letting them stay here by themselves, so he let them all to go together.

The black-clothed martial artist had done a great deal of research

into tracking Thunder Lizards. He was able to follow their tracks and traces of activity to retrace their steps. Even if it was hard stone ground where the footsteps were scattered, he was still able to rely on smell and other clues to accurately continue.

Finally, he brought Lin Ming to the lair of the two Thunder Lizards.

“It’s there, behind that big stone.”

The black-clothed martial artist pointed to an extremely secluded and well-hidden cavern not too far away. The cavern was completely composed of magnetic ore, and it was pitch dark inside. It looked just like the mouth of a giant vicious beast.

Lin Ming investigated with his soul force and found that there was a very vibrant power of thunder that undulated from inside the cavern. It was right to come along.

He would also have to thank the black-clothed martial artist, otherwise he wouldn’t have found this place.

Lin Ming said, “It’s fine if you wait outside. I’ll go in.”

Once the big stone was removed, the cavern entrance was just a bit wider than ten feet; it was just enough for a Thunder Lizard to pass through. It seems that this stone was moved by the Thunder Lizard in order to hide the entrance to the cavern. It was just like a gate, every time someone went in or out they had to move the gate.



Lin Ming spread out his soul force and cautiously walked into the cavern. The atmosphere inside was dark and damp, but it didn't affect Lin Ming's perception.

He walked a few dozen feet in, when he suddenly saw a light in front of him. The inside of the cavern was actually a very large space. There were small little inlets flowing through the ground, and the sound of water dripping onto the ground clearly reverberated through the empty silence of the cavern.

'The scenery here isn't too bad,' Lin Ming thought while maintaining a high degree of vigilance.

At this moment, he suddenly felt his heart go cold. A dark murderous intent had lock onto him, and a feeling of imminent danger rose from his heart. In the next second, a red light flashed and a thunder ball struck Lin Ming's body!

'Thunder Lizard.'

Lin Ming instantly took out the Heavy Profound Soft Spear. This Thunder Lizard was even stronger than the last two he had encountered, and the influx of red lightning that penetrated his body was much more oppressive. Even though Lin Ming had a Thunder Soul, he wasn't able to immediately quench it.

At this moment, the Thunder Lizard that had been hiding in the shadows roared again. Red balls of thunder shot out one after another and seven or eight of them bombarded Lin Ming like a

fierce storm.

Kacha! Kacha! Kacha!

The rocks around Lin Ming were split apart by the force of this attack. Lin Ming stood in the center of this thunder barrage, accepting every single strand of thunder. An intense and painful tingling sensation flooded into him. At first, Lin Ming was extremely uncomfortable, but as the vast power of thunder was gradually being absorbed by him, Lin Ming felt a faint hint of excitement.

‘Good heavens, this peak Pulse Condensation Period Thunder Lizard is no weaker than Chi Guda!’ Recognizing the strength of this Thunder Lizard, Lin Ming was thrilled. Without a doubt, the only reason that this lizard was able to evolve had to be because of some rare thunder-attribute treasure.

The Thunder Lizard found that the usually unstoppable power of its thunder barrage was having no effect whatsoever on Lin Ming. It snarled and dashed towards Lin Ming, wanting to slam him against the stone wall and squash him into a meat patty.

Lin Ming gave a loud shot. He stepped back with his left foot, pressing it against the rock. He lifted both his arms up and true essence erupted from his body. The Heavy Profound Soft Spear was like a mountain that fell from the sky!

Bang!

Lin Ming's spear struck the top of the Thunder Lizards back. At the same time, his body took advantage of the inertia and sprang upwards. Right after, the Thunder Lizard collided against the rock wall, and the entire cavern shook like an earthquake had occurred as massive stones started cascading down.

The black-clothed martial artist and the twin sisters had been waiting outside the cave when they suddenly heard a raging roar and the sound of an intense impact ringing from inside. They immediately blanched.

The two sisters even considered leaving first. If that senior inside had an accident and the vicious beast ran out, then they would die with him.

“Senior-apprentice Brother, we aren't....”

“It's alright.” The black-clothed martial artist waved his hand in dismissal. Listening to the roar, he was able to judge the strength of the Thunder Lizard inside. It shouldn't be a match for Lin Ming.

He thought that the male and female Thunder Lizard from before were spouses, but it seemed that they were actually mother and child. Currently inside the cavern was actually the fiercest grown-up male lizard!

Whiz!

The Thunder Lizard struck out with its tail. Lin Ming roared and

Flow like Silk burst out. Without hesitation he lifted the spear and smashed down onto the tail.

Kacha!

There was the sound of stone cracking. Lin Ming's Heavy Profound Soft Spear had bent into a crescent moon!

Even though the Heavy Profound Soft Spear was very elastic, it still couldn't resist such a strong shock. Normal martial artists would already have their hands paralyzed and even broken their arms from such an impact.

However, after Lin Ming entered the Sorcerer Pagoda, his body's physical strength had become fearsome. He was able to resist this impact, and instead, it was the Thunder Lizard's spine that was injured by Flow like Silk.

“Die!”

Lin Ming didn't waste any more time. He directly opened the Heretical God Force!

Thunderfire Annihilation!

In order to deal with a peak Pulse Condensation Period master, Lin Ming could only use his strongest move. At worst, he would just return to the cavern and wait until he was restored to peak condition before he exited again.

The power of thunder and fire intertwined together. The dark cave instantly bloomed with a dazzling brilliance, as if a sun had begun to rise from inside the cave!

The vivid blaze of light illuminated out from the cavern; even the black-clothed martial artist and the two twins couldn't help but close their eyes. Following closely was an ear-shattering explosion; it was at least 10 times louder than the Thunder Lizard's roar!

A visible shockwave rushed out from the dark cavern. The 10,000 jin large stone that had been used to block the cavern entrance was sent flying like a lightweight ball that had been kicked; it instantly flew across the air.

The entire cave trembled. Even the rocky ground underneath shook as a violent tremor passed through the entire cavern and countless stones fell from the ceiling. At that moment, the two twin girls suspected that the cavern was about to collapse.

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In the cave, waves of blood had already stained the ground crimson. Lin Ming was propping himself up with the Heavy Profound Soft Spear, panting for breath as he stared at the huge corpse of the Thunder Lizard.

Although Lin Ming's strength had greatly increased after entering the Sorcerer Pagoda, the amount of true essence that Thunderfire Annihilation used had increased correspondingly.

In just one move, almost 40% of Lin Ming's vast true essence reserves had been consumed. The cost was considerable.

Lin Ming crammed some pills into his mouth and pulled out a True Essence Stone as he continuously absorbed the true essence within. After he recovered a bit, Lin Ming stood up and continued to walk deeper into the cavern. He didn't even bother taking the time to cut out the Thunder Pearl from the dead Thunder Lizard.

Lin Ming had already probed further into the cavern with his soul force, and didn't sense any other enemies or threats within. At the end of the cave, he found a red bamboo rooted in a hard magnetic ore surface, stubbornly growing.

Red arcs of lightning twined around the bamboo branch as it crackled. The bamboo leaves were just like sharp swords.

A incomparably formidable power of thunder was steadily streaming out from this bamboo. Without a doubt, this bamboo was the reason for the cave's rich power of thunder.

This bamboo was the thunder-attribute treasure that the black-clothed martial artist had mentioned.

# Chapter 202 – Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo

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Looking at this red thunder bamboo, Lin Ming was able to feel a formidable power emanating from it.

Feeling exuberant, he prepared to pick the bamboo. However, he immediately paused. Was there a taboo in picking this sort of valuable material?

He had never seen this thunder bamboo before, but maybe the black-clothed martial artist might have heard about it. With this thought, Lin Ming called out to the black-clothed martial artist to come in.

The black-clothed martial artist had been waiting patiently outside the cave, feeling a bit perturbed. He was afraid that he had guessed wrong and had aroused Lin Ming's wrath because of that. Although Lin Ming had said it didn't matter if he was right or wrong, no one could guarantee that Lin Ming wouldn't turn hostile against them.

At this moment, he heard the voice of Lin Ming sound in his ear, speaking only a few words, "Enter the cave and check this for me."

The black-clothed martial artist's heart tightened. He grit his teeth and told the twin sisters and the Viscera Training stage youth, "Come in with me."

The group cautiously entered on their tippy-toes. Due to the dim lighting in the cave, as the twin girls were walking deeper, they felt something bump against their feet. As soon as they peered downwards, they saw a massive Red Thunder Lizard lying dead on the floor. The twins almost fainted as they let out an alarming cry.

“It’s okay, it’s already dead,” The black-clothed martial artist assured.

As he saw the deep scarlet scales of the Thunder Lizard, the black-clothed martial artist was startled. This was a Thunder Lizard that was equal to a peak Pulse Condensation Period martial artist in strength! Even if it was his master who encountered this fellow, he would instantly be killed, yet now, this fearsome beast had been slaughtered.

As the group reached the end of the cave, the black-clothed martial artist finally arrived to where Lin Ming was at. The moment the black-clothed martial artist laid eyes on the crimson bamboo in front of Lin Ming, he let out a sigh of relief. He wasn’t wrong!

Lin Ming pointed at the red bamboo and asked, “You know what this is?”

The black-clothed martial artist shifted his vision to the red bamboo. He hadn’t taken a good look at it a moment ago, but now that he carefully reviewed it, he was instantly awed. “This...this is probably Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo!”



“Mm? Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo?” Lin Ming looked at the red bamboo and the red lightning that twined around the bamboo. ‘Why wasn’t this called Red Electricity Spirit Bamboo instead?’

The black-clothed martial artist saw Lin Ming’s doubting expression and said, “This is because the bamboo hasn’t grown up yet. When Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo is 60 years old it’s shoots would be white. When it’s 900 years old it’s shoots would be red. And when its 9000 years old it’s shoots are purple.”

Lin Ming said, “This is only a young bamboo?”

“Mm.”

“This....” Lin Ming couldn’t help but be slightly disappointed. Even if it was a rare material, it was still only a young bamboo, so its inherent power was limited.

The black-clothed martial artist saw Lin Ming’s disappointment and consoled, “Senior, although it is only 900 year-old bamboo, it is still very precious and rare. Not only that, but since there is a young bamboo, then there should be a Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo too. Every 9000 years only one bamboo shoot will be born. The small bamboo shoot will drill through magnetic ore and live inside until it finds a good place to break out, where it will grow into white bamboo.”

“Oh?” Lin Ming mind’s stirred. “You mean to say that there is an adult Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo in Thundercrash Mountain?”

“Yes, if there isn’t a problem, then there should be. Moreover, that bamboo should already be 9,900 years old.”

A Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo would only breed a new bamboo shoot every 9000 years. Since this red bamboo shoot was already 900 years old, then the adult should be 9900 years old.

“9900 years old.....” Lin Ming furrowed his eyebrows. It was said that thunder had been striking Thundercrash Mountain for 10,000 years. That would mean that this bamboo was nearly as old as Thundercrash Mountain!

If Lin Ming wasn’t wrong, then this bamboo would definitely be at the summit of Thundercrash Mountain!

But with his current strength, if he met a Houtian realm Blue Thunder Lizard, he could only run for his life; how would he ever reach the summit?

And the legends even said that there was a Purple Thunder Lizard that was equal to a Xiantian realm martial artist!

In addition, he was afraid of the probability of there being more than one.

Even if Lin Ming was able to resist the lightning that the Purple Thunder Lizards spat out, there was no way that he could resist their physical assault.

The Thunder Lizards had the blood of a Flood Dragon flowing through their veins; they were not common vicious beasts.

Although he knew there was little hope, more so that there would be danger within danger, Lin Ming still decided to climb up Thundercrash Mountain. He would climb until he reached his limit; until he was no longer able to go even one more step higher, otherwise he would regret it forever.

Lin Ming asked the black-clothed martial artist, “Is there a taboo to picking the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo?”

The black-clothed martial artist answered, “It is hard to sever Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo with swords or spears; it can only be easily cut off with the power of thunder. But Senior, this sort of Spirit Bamboo doesn’t form easily, it comes from a combination of Thundercrash Mountains energy and the spiritual pulse of the land. If possible, I hope that Senior can leave the bamboo root so that in a few hundred or thousand years, a new Violet Electricity Bamboo can be born.”

“I understand.” Lin Ming nodded. It wasn’t admirable to destroy a valuable material’s origins; it was quite a dreadful thing. This sort of treasure only formed in extremely difficult conditions; it needs all sort of luck and special environments to form.

Normally, a martial artist would abide by this unwritten rule; it could be considered accumulating a bit of good karma.

Lin Ming pulled out his saber. It's sharp blade was bright as snow, and it shimmered with a deadly cold gleam. This was the high-grade human-step treasure that was taken from Huo Gong, and it was also the saber he carried with him.

Let alone a high-grade human-step treasure, the twin sisters hadn't even seen many low-grade human-step treasures. Only their master had a low-grade human-step treasure sword. The two twin sisters were, once again, filled with envy.

Lin Ming didn't mind revealing his wealth. With his current strength, even if he wore a high-grade human-step treasure and it became public, he would still be able to protect it.

True essence poured into the Thunder Soul within the Heretical God Seed. The power of thunder steadily streamed out, and the snow white treasure sword began to sparkle with a faint purple light.

Lin Ming took a deep breath and aimed at the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo's root. He slashed out!

Cha!

Lin Ming hadn't imagined that it would be so tough. The crimson blood-coloured Spirit Bamboo was cut down, its edges smooth like a mirror.

When Lin Ming reached out to grab it. The black-clothed martial

artist cried out in alarm. This Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo contained the violent power of thunder. A normal martial artist's arm would be charred to ash. But, thinking of Lin Ming's strength and the way he had been able to take on the Thunder Lizard's thunder ball, he felt that it should be alright.

Sure enough, Lin Ming gripped the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo. Besides looking a little stiff, there wasn't any difference. Even his clothes were alright.

‘What a strong power of thunder!’

Lin Ming praised the bamboo in his mind. If 900 year old red bamboo had such a potent force contained within, then what would 9000 purple bamboo be like? It was simply unimaginable.

Unfortunately, this bamboo was taken too early; it wasn't able to grow into that.

Although he didn't entertain much hope, Lin Ming still asked, “Is there any way to grow Violet Electricity Thunder Bamboo?”

The black-clothed martial artist said, “It's impossible. Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo must grow in lands that are rich in the thunder element, such as Thundercrash Mountain. Not only that, but the bamboo has a proud character and won't be raised.”

“Mm. I understand.”

Lin Ming placed the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo into his spatial ring and glanced at black-clothed martial artist's party of four.

He looked at the two swords in the twin girls hands, and hesitated slightly. He said, "Take out your swords and let me have a look."

"....Okay." The two young girls obediently drew out their swords. The soft swords were forged from fine steel. To a mortal blacksmith, making this sword would not have been easy. But compared to a treasure sword made by a refining master, it was far weaker.

Lin Ming traced his finger on his spatial ring and three low-grade human-step treasure swords appeared in his hands.

Seeing the swords emit a snow bright light, the twin sister's eyes widened....an idea caught in their mind that made their heartbeat accelerate and their mouths dry. Were these swords for them? Could they also have a treasure like this one day?

"For you." Lin Ming casually tossed the swords and they pierced tip first into the magnetic ore. These swords were made by Huo Gong. Lin Ming had no use for the 30 low-grade human-step treasures that he had made; giving them away was just right. Of course, the low-grade human-step treasures that Huo Gong had made were very good; they were much better compared to a normal low-grade human-step treasure.

“For...for us?” The twin sisters mind reeled in surprise. They hadn’t dared to imagine that they would ever have a reward, and it would be the dream treasure they had longed for!

Lin Ming said, “You’d best be careful and put it somewhere safe, otherwise it will likely be taken. These three treasure can tempt even peak Bone Forging martial artists.”

“Yes, yes!” The two twin sisters hurriedly nodded, looking at Lin Ming with eyes filled with gratitude and hero worship.

At this moment, Lin Ming looked towards the black-clothed martial artist. The black-clothed martial artist felt his heartbeat rapidly rising. He had seen Lin Ming casually toss out three top low-grade human-step treasures without even batting an eye; it was as if he treated them like scrap iron! These three treasure swords were no less than 8 or 9 thousand gold taels!

What would he receive? The black-clothed martial artists had a giddy feeling of excitement, anticipation, and apprehension.

Lin Ming looked at the black-clothed martial artist and said, “Your weapon is a staff. It’s too bad, but I do not have a treasured staff. I do have a dark purple elastic iron spear, but because it was a weapon I once used, I cannot give it to you...”

Hearing Lin Ming say this, the black-clothed martial artist was slightly disappointed. But, Lin Ming’s following words caused his heart to be filled with a great joy.

Lin Ming stated, “Cultivation pills, 20,000 gold, cultivation method. You can choose one.”

Cultivation pills, 20,000 gold, and also a cultivation method?

The black-clothed martial artist mouth dried. If he wasn’t able to reach the Pulse Condensation Period, then he would never be able to earn 20,000 gold in his lifetime. As for the cultivation pills, those were dream treasures that martial artists longed for. And since these were pills given by this senior, they must be priceless.

The black-clothed martial artist went through a series of mental battles. He finally said, “I want the cultivation method!”

Compared to pills or gold, a cultivation method was the most important. This was the foundation of every martial artist!

“Good. But, I warn you. Do not reveal this cultivation method to the public, otherwise you may experience calamity.” Lin Ming flicked his hand and a jade slip appeared in his palm.

This was the medium-step human-grade cultivation method manual that he had taken from Huo Gong after his death. This set of cultivation methods did not belong to the Seven Profound Valleys, otherwise Lin Ming would not dare to hand it over. If he was right, then this cultivation method should be taken from other martial artists that Huo Gong had killed. In short, it had a questionable background, and Lin Ming didn’t want to have it with him in order to avoid future trouble. Giving it to someone of the Southern Wilderness was a good choice.



The black-clothed martial artist received the jade slip and probed with his soul force. He was immediately overjoyed.

‘Medium-grade human-step cultivation method!’

## Chapter 203 – Near The Summit

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This medium-grade human-step cultivation method was absolutely worth more than 20,000 gold taels. Although Lin Ming had said that this cultivation method could give rise to a fatal calamity, the risk was nothing compared to the tremendous rewards that this cultivation method would bring.

The black-clothed martial artist thought increasingly more that telling Lin Ming about the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo was the best choice he had ever made. He didn't have the ability to cut the spirit bamboo down, but even if he did, there was no way he could sell it. If he took this level of treasure out and showed it to others, he would be eaten to the bones.

“You can only take the Thunder Lizard's blood away; I have no need for it.” Lin Ming said this because the Thunder Lizard had the bloodline of a Flood Dragon flowing in it, so their blood had a very great medicinal value. If it was placed in a bath, one could soak in blood and come out with a stronger and healthier body.

The black-clothed martial artist's group of four nodded in joy. This was a great harvest of income. The blood of a Red Thunder Lizard that was on the same level as a peak Pulse Condensation Period martial artist could sell for at least one or two thousand taels of gold.

“Alright. Then we shall part from here. About today's events, I don't want others to know about it. Otherwise...”

Lin Ming didn't say it out loud, but he let the clear meaning behind his words linger in the air. In fact, he wasn't afraid if others knew, he just didn't want to be troubled.

The black-clothed martial artist shrank backwards and hurriedly nodded. The only one that they could not conceal the truth from was their master. But, after he obtained this medium-grade human-step cultivation method, the black-clothed martial artist already planned to leave the school. If he went back and faced his master, would he still be able to keep the cultivation method jade slip treasure that he had obtained?

It wasn't only the black-clothed martial artist, the twin girls also had similar thoughts. They had finally managed to obtain a treasure sword after so much difficulty. They didn't want their master to take it away.

All in all, they had been in the school for such a long time, yet they hadn't obtained any substantial benefits from their master there.

After Lin Ming departed, the black-clothed martial artist gathered the twin sisters and their young junior-apprentice brother to have a meeting. They decided that all of them would leave their school and establish their own gang. By relying on the medium-grade human-step cultivation method that Lin Ming had given them, they would make a name for themselves.

However, this was a story for another time.

...

After he had parted from the black-clothed martial artist's group, Lin Ming looked for a safe place and started to absorb the power of thunder from the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo.

This red lightning was much more cruel and savage than all of the lightning that Lin Ming had absorbed so far.

But Lin Ming was not worried. First, he sat down in meditation. After he had completely recovered all the true essence he had lost, he entered the ethereal martial intent state, and adjusted his mental condition to consummate tranquility.

Then, he took the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo out from his spatial ring.

Gripping the Spirit Bamboo in both hands, Lin Ming began to guide the power of thunder in the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo, allowing it to flow into his body.

After the crimson power of thunder entered Lin Ming's meridians, it was just like a wild horse that was dashing around in defiance. If a normal martial artist at the Pulse Condensation realm or even the Houtian realm, had this tyrannically oppressive red thunder enter their organs, their meridians would be destroyed and they would be severely injured or even die.

But Lin Ming had the existence of a Thunder Soul in his body. No

matter how overbearing the lightning was, once it encountered the Thunder Soul, it would slowly be absorbed.

In this way, the small Thunder Soul was just like a small silkworm. It continually nibbled on the power of thunder that was in the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo, slowly eroding it. During this period, Lin Ming only felt a faint numb feeling; it wasn't particularly painful.

After Lin Ming had sat in meditation for half an hour, he had managed to completely absorb the power of thunder. As he looked in at the Heretical God Seed, Lin Ming was pleasantly surprised. After absorbing the lightning from the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo, the energy of his Thunder Soul had increased by 50%.

If just a 900 year old baby bamboo was able to increase the power of his Thunder Soul by 50%, what would a 9000 year old bamboo do to it?

Lin Ming was filled with anticipation. Unfortunately, there might not even be a sliver of hope in obtaining this bamboo.

After absorbing the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo, Lin Ming continued climbing upwards.

The higher he went, the more Thunder Lizards there were.

These Thunder Lizards were superior vicious beasts that had the bloodline of a Flood Dragon. Although the Thunder Lizards at the

base of Thundercrash Mountain had a very shallow bloodline, they still weren't easy to deal with.

As Lin Ming approached the mountainside, he began to feel it becoming difficult.

Whiz!

The spear wind pierced the void. Lin Ming's spear shot through the immense body of a Red Thunder Lizard and vibrating true essence erupted. This middle Pulse Condensation Period Red Thunder Lizard immediately died a terrible death.

After Lin Ming had fused with the reverse scale blood, his Flow like Silk continued to grow. Even if it entered the enemy's body, it wouldn't easily break down, and its power had also increased a bit. Otherwise, with just true essence attacks alone, Lin Ming would have found it exceedingly difficult to kill a middle Pulse Condensation Thunder Lizard. After all, the physical defense capabilities of a Thunder Lizard were much sturdier than those a human at the same level of cultivation.

Lin Ming let a breath loose as he cut the Thunder Lizards open and dug out the Thunder Pearl. With a thought, he absorbed the power of thunder from the Thunder Pearl into his meridians. This was already the 20th Thunder Lizard that he had killed. Through the continuous absorption of the Thunder Pearls, the total increase in power of his Thunder Soul had already reached 60%.

He looked up at Thundercrash Mountain. From where he was

now, there was still about 50,000 feet until he reached the summit. He was already able to clearly see the thick lightning that flashed at the summit. This lightning was true thunder. Even though Lin Ming had a Thunder Soul, he didn't dare to attempt to go up there.

Lin Ming used his movement technique and rushed towards the summit. At this moment, a blue light flashed and a blue arc of lightning hit Lin Ming.

Zizizi!

A powerful numbing electric feeling made Lin Ming go stiff, almost causing him to fall. This was only because he had absorbed the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo a while ago and his Thunder Soul had become much stronger. Otherwise, Lin Ming suspected he really would have fallen.

“Blue Thunder Lizard!”

This was the first time that Lin Ming had seen a Thunder Lizard at the same level as a Houtian realm martial artist.

Without a single word, he launched his movement technique to flee. Although he could resist the thunder attack of a Blue Thunder Lizard, it was impossible for him to kill it. Even if he used Thunderfire Annihilation, he still wouldn't be able to kill it.

In that case, Lin Ming didn't want to waste any effort.

Thankfully, Lin Ming was much faster than the Blue Thunder Lizard. In a few jumps, he had already lost it.

In the mountainside region, there were mostly Red Thunder Lizards. Blue Thunder Lizards would only occasionally appear. Lin Ming went on a killing spree; he slaughtered for one day and one night!

After such a long rampage, Lin Ming's fighting skill were becoming more and more refined, and the Thunder Soul in his body had finally achieved 70% increased power after absorbing a massive amount of thunder. But, as the power of this Thunder Soul increased, the effects of the nourishment from the Thunder Pearl were becoming less and less.

Lin Ming filled an empty pool with Thunder Lizard blood and soaked in it for a quarter of an hour. Afterwards, Lin Ming dried his body and took a new set of clothes out of his spatial ring. Thunder Lizard blood could to increase the health and fitness of the human body. Although it's effect wasn't too obvious on Lin Ming, he still didn't want to waste it.

After eating a simple meal, Lin Ming leapt up on a several hundred feet tree and began to meditate. A Bone Forging martial artist could go for days without sleeping and still remain energetic and buoyant. But, in order for Lin Ming to maintain his peak condition, he had to rest for a couple hours. The next fights would be increasingly savage.

As he closed in on the summit, Lin Ming's speed became slower. Before, it had taken him a few hours to reach the mountainside



from the base of Thundercrash Mountain, but now the same distance took him an entire night.

Lin Ming finally arrived at an area blanketed in ice and snow. Every 1000 feet here took at least a few hours.

He needed to use his soul force to constantly assess his surroundings, and then slowly and cautiously, advance forwards. He didn't want to accidentally run into a Xiantian realm Purple Thunder Lizard. If that happened, there wasn't much he could do.

Of course, Lin Ming could actually fly into the air and go straight into the sky. But in that case, there was no reason to come to Thundercrash Mountain. He would only be able to float around in the sky and look at the scenery. It would be impossible for him to obtain a shred of thunder power, and then, it would be even more impossible for him to obtain a Thunder Soul.

Cold winds blew everywhere, and snow filled the air. In the upper region of Thundercrash mountain, everywhere one looked there was the frost blue color of ice; crystal clear and incomparably pure.

This was true 10,000 year ice; hard as rock and beautiful like jade.

Clouds pooled at the ground. Leaning over, one was able to see an infinitely dense fog, surging seas of clouds reaching into the vast infinity; this truly was a fabled paradise.

What a pity that this beautiful land was entirely blanketed with a savage killing aura.

When Lin Ming saw a dark Blue Thunder Lizard near a patch of 10,000 year old ice, he knew that he had reached the end of his road. If he took even one step further, then he would be placed in a life-threatening situation.

This deep blue scaled Thunder Lizard was equal to a peak Houtian realm martial artist. Its scales were the exact color of the 10,000 year old ice, and it almost perfectly blended in. If one wasn't carefully looking, it was simply impossible to find.

Seeing this scene, Lin Ming couldn't help but exclaim. This Blue Thunder Lizard was a beautiful animal. Especially in this bitter cold land, it looked just like a fine ice sculpture.

But this beautiful ice sculpture could quickly kill him. The difference in its strength and Lin Mings was simply too great.

Prior to this, Lin Ming had encountered a middle Houtian realm Blue Thunder Lizard that had caused him some distress. Because it's speed wasn't slower than Lin Ming's, Lin Ming had finally flew into the sky and only then was he able to escape unharmed.

Now that he faced a peak Houtian realm Thunder Lizard, the result could be imagined.

Lin Ming didn't dare to go forwards any further. Who knew,

maybe the Xiantian realm Thunder Lizard could fly. If it could, then he was dead.

Lin Ming was already prepared to run away, but at this moment, he noticed that the deep Blue Thunder Lizard's eyes were filled a trace of confusion; it didn't seem as if it were preparing to attack him.

“Mm? What is this fellow doing?” Lin Ming was filled with complete vigilance. He didn't even taken the Heavy Profound Soft Spear out, because he knew that using a spear in this situation was useless. It was better to keep less weight on him so he could run faster.

The Thunder Lizard growled in bursts, its eyes revealing its confusion that gradually evolved into vigilance and fear. Its roar became louder, as if it were warning Lin Ming to leave its territory immediately.

Lin Ming had a puzzled look. “If I read this right, this Thunder Lizard seems to be afraid of me? What does it have to fear? I don't even have a tenth of its strength.”

“This is the strongest Thunder Lizard that I've met so far, but this strongest one is actually scared of me. Why....?”

# Chapter 204 – The Woman In Red

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“This is the strongest Thunder Lizard that I’ve met so far, but this one is actually scared of me. Why....?”

Lin Ming’s mind suddenly flashed with a thought; reverse scale blood!

If he wasn’t mistaken, this fear originated from the reverse scale blood that was sleeping deeply in his body!

A Thunder Lizard had the bloodline of a Flood Dragon flowing through it. The more powerful a Thunder Lizard was, the richer its Flood Dragon bloodline would be.

A Flood Dragon could be considered to be a low-level dragon.

If a Flood Dragon met a True Dragon, it would have a sense of awe and fear that would inevitably arise from the depths of its soul. No matter how savage it was, it would always be constrained.

Lin Ming’s inner reverse scale blood was meager. Not only that, Lin Ming’s cultivation was also low, so the blood in him hadn’t fully awoken. Therefore, a common Thunder Lizard was unable to feel it.

But this peak Houtian realm Thunder Lizard was powerful, so its bloodline was much purer. The acutely related bloodline in it allowed it to feel the power slumbering in Lin Ming.

A True Dragon's blood, even if it was only a trace, still emitted an infinitely vigorous Qi that forced all beasts to submit. Although this Thunder Lizard's strength was far superior to Lin Ming, it still felt a fear from the bottom of its soul.

If Lin Ming's strength was more formidable, the Thunder Lizard might even kneel in submission.

The Thunder Lizard constantly roared, arcs of electricity flashing around its body. It was warning Lin Ming to leave its territory.

This result was what Lin Ming had been hoping for. Since he wasn't able to kill a peak Houtian realm Thunder Lizard, he could at least avoid it.

"It looks like I can still climb Thundercrash Mountain!"

Lin Ming clenched his fists. The Heavens were truly blessing him. With his strength, he would have only been barely able to climb up the mountainside of Thundercrash Mountain. But thanks to his Thunder Soul, he didn't fear the long distance thunder attacks of the Thunder Lizards, and he was able to climb up the region of snow and ice.

And now when he was at his limit again, the reverse scale blood was actually able to suppress the bloodline of these Thunder Lizards. Like this, he might really be able to pass through this snowfield.

As long as he passed through the remaining 30,000 feet fields of snow, he would reach the summit of Thundercrash Mountain. That was only the location where thunder-attribute materials were most likely to be born.

There, thunder had fallen without end for 10,000 years. If a human walked up there, a little bad luck and they would be struck by lightning. This was true heavenly thunder. Even though Lin Ming had a Thunder Soul protecting him, he was still apprehensive about the situation. He didn't know if he would be severely injured after being struck by this heavenly thunder.

Lin Ming circled around the peak Houtian realm Thunder Lizard and continued moving forwards. After several miles, Lin Ming's suddenly stopped. Stunned, he look forward as he stiffly stood there.

In front of him, about 200 feet away, Lin Ming saw a scene that he would never forget in his entire life.

Above a vast expanse of ice, a tall and slim woman with a full figure was gracefully standing there. Everything about her was outstanding. She wore a flame-red coat, and she had a flowing scarlet dress wrapped around her. Her soft, ink black hair hung down to her waist, and both her feet were bare. Her fair, jade-like feet were standing on an azure platform of 10,000 year frost ice. She was like a vibrant red rose that grew out of the snow. The crimson red and snow white contrast reflected a glamorous and majestic beauty.

And in front of that woman, there was a scarlet crested bird. It seemed to have a blood red crown, and its feathers were red like living flames. Its long tail dragged against the ground, burning the floor wherever it passed.

That is... the Vermillion Bird!

Lin Ming's eyes widened. The Saint Beast that he had seen in Blackwater Swamp was actually in front of him now!

Sensing Lin Ming's presence, the woman glanced back at Lin Ming. Her beautiful face was calm like an ocean, with an otherworldly atmosphere filled with smoke and flames; it really gave one a deep feeling of suffocation.

It seems as if she had noticed Lin Ming's cultivation and she was quite curious. He was only a peak Bone Forging boy; how did he get here with his life intact?

Lin Ming froze. He wasn't just shocked by the beauty of the woman, but also by the mystical breath that emanated from her body.

This lady seemed like a normal lady, her breath told Lin Ming that she was more powerful than anyone he had ever met in his life!

Xiantian...

No, maybe not even just Xiantian!

She might be at the late Xiantian realm, or the extreme Xiantian realm, or... maybe she was an existence that surpassed the Xiantian realm!

To be able to use a Vermillion Bird Saint Beast as a mount, what sort of ridiculous concept was that?

Lin Ming's mind was in a state of high tension and nervousness. If this person wanted to extinguish his life, it wouldn't even take a moment!

The woman was still looking at Lin Ming with surprise. One human and one bird, with the same flame coloration, standing above the vast white fields of 10,000 year ice; it was just like a blazing inferno, beautiful and sublime to the point where it seemed unreal.

“Interesting.”

The woman looked at Lin Ming for a good while, and then suddenly, she smiled gently. With that single word, her voice was revealed to be melodious like a songbird.

Then, her body seemed as light as a feather as she floated up and onto the back of the Vermillion Bird. The Vermillion Bird chirped, and then, it soared into the sky!



A whirling blast of hot air rushed out in all directions. Feeling this strikingly hot air, Lin Ming already felt his back seep with a cold sweat.

“So... the Vermillion Bird I saw in Blackwater Swamp is this woman’s mount... perhaps that Vermillion Bird was already carrying that woman, and she saw the scene where I was being hunted by the little flame boy.”

“Why would she come to Thundercrash Mountain? Is it to find the Thunder Soul? Or, does she simply live here?”

Lin Ming’s mind raced with the possibilities. Looking at the vast Thundercrash Mountain above him, he wasn’t sure whether or not he should continue going forwards.

If that woman came for the Thunder Soul, that was a dream he’d best forget.

After hesitating for a long time, Lin Ming clenched his teeth and decided to continue forwards. Since he had come this far, he might as well attempt to go further. Even if the Thunder Soul wasn’t for him, that didn’t mean there weren’t any other lucky chances. The summit of Thundercrash Mountain had already shined with endless thunder for 10,000 years. Who knew what sort of valuable materials were born there? If the opportunity was good, he might find some surprises.

Lin Ming had just taken a few steps forwards, when the sky suddenly resounded with the decisive sharp sound of a bird,

directly reaching into the Primal Chaos Heavens!

This was...Phoenix Cry?

Without having a chance to reflect on what had just happened, Lin Ming heard the thunderous sound of a beast roar one after another! For a time, it was like he was in the midst of a massive thunderstorm; absolutely deafening!

“What... what the hell?”

Lin Ming felt a little muddled. At this moment, he heard the sound of a rumbling vibration spread through the ground. It was like the countless roaring and thunderous beats of a drum. He could even feel the ground shaking, as if a massive stampede of monsters was rushing out!

“Mm?”

Lin Ming withdrew the Heavy Profound Soft Spear. In the distance, he saw a the deep Blue Thunder Lizard menacingly rush towards him. Because of the speed at which it was going, clouds of snow curled around it like a snow dragon, billowing into the sky!

“That’s the peak Houtian realm Thunder Lizard powerhouse I just saw earlier!”

Lin Ming’s pupils contracted. This fellow wasn’t so enraged a moment ago; it was something he couldn’t afford to mess with!

Without hesitation, he retracted his spear and flew into the air. The Blue Thunder Lizard blew past Lin Ming in a rolling cloud of smoke and snow as it blew through, having no intention to pause.

Lin Ming found that this Thunder Lizard hadn't come to deal with him.

But if not him, had it come for that woman in red from a moment ago? Remembering the scene from before and that resonant Phoenix Cry that had sounded once, Lin Ming tensed up. Was that a declaration of war?

To challenge the entire Thundercrash Mountain, including that Xiantian powerhouse Purple Thunder Lizard!?

What kind of audacious courage was that!!?

Lin Ming's heartbeat accelerated. Compared to such a powerhouse, he was just too far.

At this moment, seven or eight miles out, he saw another cloud of billowing snow like an icy dragon rush towards the summit. Lin Ming had excellent eyesight. Even though it was a far distance, he was still able to see that the Thunder Lizard was very dark blue. From the deep color of its scales, its strength was no less than a peak Houtian realm martial artist!

“Peak Houtian realm... I fear that anything below that rank

doesn't have the qualifications to participate in this war... Also, that woman in red was at least a Xiantian powerhouse. If this sort of low-level Thunder Lizard goes up, it will die with a single strike."

Lin Ming rose up a few hundred more feet. As he rose, his range of vision broadened and he could see that the roiling snow dragons were increasing.

He already determined that there were at least 8 or 9.

Lin Ming felt a surge of excitement well up in his heart. He too wanted to take a front-row seat to such a grand occasion.

If it was a Xiantian realm fight, he could still observe it from several miles out.

Thinking this, Lin Ming no longer held any reservations. He used his movement technique and directly sped towards the summit at full speed. Because all of the strong Thunder Lizards had rushed towards the summit, Lin Ming was able to travel up unimpeded. Even if he met an occasional Thunder Lizard, Lin Ming was able to rely on the reverse scale blood in him to scare it away.

Along the way, Lin Ming didn't dare to fly straight up. This was because the Vermilion Bird was flying high in the sky, and it would be too obvious if he flew. These Xiantian existences might find him annoying and casually finish him off; that would truly be an injustice.

Lin Ming had been only 30,000 feet from the summit. With his full speed, he was able to cover this distance in a short time.

Sure enough, Lin Ming was able to rush towards the summit without any resistance.

However, at this moment, Lin Ming stopped once more, stunned. He looked towards the sky, his heart shaking with earth shattering waves!

What he saw was a dragon! A real dragon!

Its claws were sharp, and its scales were a dark purple. Its long dragon body wantonly soared in the air. It was just like the dragons that were in paintings!

This titanic dragon was several times larger than the Vermillion Bird. Bright arcs of lightning danced around it like countless purple snakes as it swam in the sky. Its body was filled with a vast and peerless momentum.

In front of it, the Vermillion Bird was waving its wings, stopped in midair!

“Is this a showdown between a dragon and a phoenix?” Lin Ming gulped down saliva. He hadn’t ever imagined he would be so fortunate as to witness such a wondrous sight.

No... it wasn’t a dragon, it was a Flood Dragon. Lin Ming found

that purple dragon didn't have a horn on its head, so it was only a Flood Dragon. Still, even if it was a Flood Dragon it was still sufficiently startling. This was a top Saint Beast of the Sky Spill Continent!

“So... there was actually a Flood Dragon hidden in Thundercrash Mountain!” Lin Ming gasped. “No wonder! No wonder Thundercrash Mountain has so many Thunder Lizards, and these Thunder Lizards also have the bloodline of a Flood Dragon. That's because they are the descendants of this Flood Dragon!”

“A direct descendent of a Flood Dragon should be a Xiantian powerhouse Purple Thunder Lizard. The Blue Thunder Lizards are the descendants of the Purple Thunder Lizards. With each further generation downwards, the bloodline is more and more diluted.”

Lin Ming was suddenly enlightened; so this was how Thundercrash Mountain was formed.

# Chapter 205 – Struggle Of The Dragon And Phoenix

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There were many different species of dragon-type Saint Beasts. For example; there were Flood Dragons, Horned Dragons, Hornless Dragons, One-legged Mountain Dragons, Candle Dragons, and so on.

Although these dragons were all Saint Beasts and their appearances were similar, there were also certain characteristics that separated them. The Flood Dragon had its luminescent scales, the Winged Rain Dragon had wings, the Horned Dragon had a horn, the One-legged Mountain Dragon had one leg, and so on.

Even Flood Dragons were divided into variants. There were Red Flood Dragons, Black Flood Dragons, Blood Flood Dragons, and so on.

The Purple Flood Dragon that was flying in the sky was a rare variant of Thunder Flood Dragon. It ate thunder and lightning as food, and its personality was extremely cruel and tyrannical. It was also very promiscuous.

This Flood Dragon had settled on Thundercrash Mountain nearly 10,000 years ago and it had taken all of the mountain's treasures as its own. After it savagely mated with the original vicious beasts of Thundercrash Mountain, it finally gave rise to an overabundance of descendants; these were the Thunder Lizards.

Now facing a challenge, the Thunder Flood Dragon loudly

roared, and all of its descendants rushed to the summit of Thundercrash Mountain immediately!

The large number of Thunder Lizards were eyeing the confrontation in the air, the epic showdown between the bloodline of a Dragon and the bloodline of a Phoenix!

As for Lin Ming, he was hiding in the distance. After accidentally reaching the realm of returning to his origins, Lin Ming's ability to hide his breath was no less than a Xiantian realm masters. He hid behind a large boulder. As long as he was far away, no one should be able to find him.

Seeing the Thunder Dragon in the air, Lin Ming's mind flashed through a range of emotions. He slowly began to realize a serious problem. If he was right, the Thunder Soul of Thundercrash Mountain should be in the body of the Thunder Flood Dragon!

The Thunder Flood Dragon had lived on Thundercrash Mountain for so many years, it must have found the Thunder Soul. If it did, how could it not absorb it?

Although Lin Ming never held much hope in attaining the Thunder Soul, he always thought that with some luck, he still had a chance. Even if he failed now, it didn't mean he couldn't wait until his cultivation was a bit higher before coming back.

But now that he knew that the Thunder Soul was in the body of the Thunder Flood Dragon, he felt his heart sink with disappointment. To wrest the Thunder Soul from this beast was



simply nonsense! Let alone now, even if he entered the early Xiantian realm, his ability still might not be enough!

In the air, the confrontation was still ongoing. The red woman was standing proudly on the Vermillion Bird. A strong heavenly wind blew her ink black hair, making it dance recklessly in the wind. In the sky, countless bolts of purple lightning flashed, but she remained utterly unmoved. It was as if there was an invisible force field that was surrounding the woman in red, distorting the power of thunder.

“Ha ha, Magnetic Force Field? To deal with this Saint, you specially cultivated this technique?” In the sky, the Thunder Flood Dragon opened its mouth to spit out its judgement.

To see a large purple dragon speak was an extremely strange scene. Lin Ming was stunned, but then immediately, he thought that it wasn't unusual that a Saint Beast would be able to speak.

The woman in red looked at the Thunder Flood Dragon and slowly said, “The Magnetic Force Field is a top cultivation method, I naturally can cultivate it. It wasn't something that I especially prepared for you, so there is no need for you to think so highly of yourself.”

“Hehe, little girl, you are quite young, and yet, your words are so brave. If you called an Elder from Divine Phoenix Island to come, this Saint might give you some face... but, with just your ability? Dream on! Haha! This Saint can pinch you to death!”

The Thunder Flood Dragon brazenly laughed. Lin Ming's face had a weird color. This Thunder Flood Dragon had actually called the woman in red who a fathomless cultivation level, a little girl. It was something that only an old monster that had lived for several tens of thousands of years could say.

But Divine Phoenix Island? What sect was that? If there was a master like this woman in red, then there also had to be stronger Elders in her sect. It was far beyond anything that the Seven Profound Valleys could produce. It might be a fourth-grade sect, or even the legendary fifth-grade sects. He couldn't imagine how far it was from here; he had never heard of it before.

Facing the Thunder Flood Dragons boastful shouting, the woman in red had the same calm expression as before, without a hint of anger. She said, "So, you refuse?"

"Cut the idle talk. For a chicken that still doesn't have all of its feathers, you want half of this Saint's blood? Such a ridiculous request, how can this Saint possibly agree with that!?"

"Then... we must fight."

"Hehe! Once I defeat you, don't think this Saint will have the scruples not to kill you just because of Divine Phoenix Island!" The Thunder Flood Dragon roared like a thunderclap, lightning writhing over its vast body.

Lin Ming could clearly hear the conversation between the dragon and the woman from his hiding spot. They had really revealed a lot

of information. The mysterious woman wanted half of the Flood Dragon's blood for 'the chicken that still doesn't have all of its feathers'?"

Implying...

Lin Ming looked up at the Vermillion Bird that was dancing in the countless arcs of purple lightning, a vast aura emanating from it. It's appearance was majestic. If he was right, then what the Thunder Flood Dragon had called a 'chicken that still doesn't have all of its feathers' could only be this Vermillion Bird.

In other words, this Vermillion Bird hadn't grown up yet. No wonder it was so much smaller than the Thunder Flood Dragon.

Even though it was still a child, it had this aura and strength. With just a look it had managed to scare off the Fire Worm Shaman's little flame boy avatar. What would happen if it were grown up?

Lin Ming couldn't help but ruefully smile. No matter what talent a human had, or what kind of monstrous genius they were, their natural talent was nothing in front of these Saint Beasts. As long as a Saint Beast ate and slept, they would grow up to be a Xiantian realm master. With some lucky chances and some cultivation, they might even break through the Xiantian realm and reach a higher realm!

If it was a true God Beast, such as a Golden-winged Roc or a True Dragon, not to mention simple things like this, but once grown,

they could use their claws to pierce the endless void and their tails could shatter stars. With such power, even the mighty elders in the Realm of the Gods would find it difficult to compare.

If this woman in red could take half of the Thunder Flood Dragon's blood, what sort of effect would it have on a young Vermillion Bird?

As Lin Ming pondered this, the fight in the air had already begun. He didn't know when, but that woman in red had drawn a sword in her hand. The blade was only two inches wide, but it was a full four feet long. It was slender and narrow, and the image of a phoenix with its wings spread wide as if it wanted to fly was carved on the sword hilt. The blade was crimson all over as if it were soaked in blood.

As soon as he saw this crimson long sword, Lin Ming's eyes widened. He had never seen a treasure sword of this level before. Just by feeling powerful fluctuations of energy coming from it, he guessed that it was at least an Earth-step treasure. As for whether it was a low-grade Earth-step, medium-grade Earth-step treasure, or a high-grade Earth-step treasure, he had no way to determine.

There was a huge difference between a human-step treasure and an Earth-step treasure. Not even the Seven Profound Martial House Master Qin Ziya had an Earth-step treasure.

This was a battle between two peerless masters. Lin Ming stared with eyes wide open, not wanting to miss a single detail.

When a mighty elder of the Realm of the Gods had watched a True Dragon battle a Golden-winged Roc, he had been divinely inspired and went into seclusion for 60 years, finally creating the unmatched movement technique 'Golden Roc Shattering the Void'. Although it was impossible for himself to achieve such a level, it was still likely that he would receive some insights from this battle.

The woman in red waved her long sword, and crimson flame flushed into existence on the sword edge. At first, this flame was only several feet long, but when the woman in red lifted this sword high, the flames shot up to the sky!

Her long black hair escaped its hairband, fluttering in the wind.

A huge blazing inferno of flames impacted with the Primal Chaos Heavens; it was as if the sky had been violently washed away. Outside of the Primal Chaos Heavens, fiery heaven and earth origin energy constantly converged on the long sword, forming a giant vortex of flames!

This flaming vortex spun slowly. It was jet black in the center, as if the world itself had been torn apart, revealing a mystical passageway.

The Thunder Flood Dragon watched this situation and its purple eyes reflected a solemn dignity. Under its vast body, dozens of peak Houtian realm Thunder Lizards roared together, opening their jaws to release a gigantic barrage of Thunder Balls into the sky. At the same time, a gigantic shining net of lightning covered the Thunder Lizards, supporting them. This was obviously a

protective lightning shroud.

After these blue balls of thunder flew into the air, the Thunder Flood Dragon opened his mouth and sucked all of it in. After having inhaled so much power of thunder, purple arcs of electricity surged on the Thunder Flood Dragon's body. Those arcs of thunder that had been thin before had now thickened by several times.

Seeing this, Lin Ming understood. Listening to the bragging of the Thunder Flood Dragon, it would have seemed as if the woman in red was inferior to the Thunder Flood Dragon. The Thunder Flood Dragon had showed some respect to Divine Phoenix Island and offered to let her off this once.

But now, it seemed that even with the help of all its descendants, the Thunder Flood Dragon only barely exceeded the power of the woman in red. In a one versus one situation, the Thunder Flood Dragon wouldn't be a match for that woman in red!

Realizing this, Lin Ming let out a cold breath. This woman in red was even more powerful than he had thought!

The Thunder Flood Dragon was an adult Flood Dragon. After a Saint Beast grew up, it wasn't strange for them to reach the Xiantian realm. Yet, even like this, it still had to rely on the support of its descendants to barely suppress the woman in red!

The massive inferno column combusted, burning hotter and fiercer than before. Its thickness increased to ten feet, and it was

just like a pillar of flame that was holding up the heavens. It reached into the Primal Chaos Heavens, lighting up the entire sky.

Facing such a formidable attack, the Thunder Flood Dragon responded without reservation. It focused all of its power of thunder into its two front claws, and a purple thunder ball began to rapidly form. This Thunderball started at ten feet, but it rapidly expanded to over 100 feet; its diameter was even thicker than the Thunder Flood Dragon!

Lightning flashed around that purple thunder ball. The center of the Thunder ball became a deep, nearly black violet color, as it gleamed with a suffocating light.

Without mercy, the four foot crimson long sword slashed down. It was as if the flaming pillar that supported the heavens had come crashing down. Not only did it cut towards the Thunder Flood Dragon, but it also reached the Thunder Flood Dragon's descendants! These descendants were the minions of the Thunder Flood Dragon; the woman in red wanted to finish them off quickly!

The Thunder Flood Dragon erupted with an ear-shattering roar. Its claws thrust forwards, and that massive purple thunder ball flew at that woman in red like a meteor!

The huge pillar of flame and the thunder ball struck each other.

Bang!

A terrifying explosion rang through the clouds and cracked stone open! It was as if the void itself had been torn asunder; the whole of Thundercrash Mountain shook under the impact!

Burning flames smashed down like countless meteorites towards the dozens of Thunder Lizards that were under the lightning shield. The entire lightning shield trembled fiercely, and some of the peak Houtian realm Blue Thunder Lizards vomited blood, they were seriously injured!

Lin Ming felt a creeping sense of incomparable horror and awe as he watched this from afar. If just the aftermath had such power, how terrifying would it be to face it head on?

As he was exclaiming in amazement, he glanced in the corner of his eyes and found that behind the Thunder Lizards that had scattered after death, there was a giant cavern behind them. This cavern was completely made of magnetic ore, and the entrance was over 100 feet wide.

A sudden idea flashed into Lin Ming's mind. Was this... the Thunder Flood Dragon's cavern?



## Chapter 206 – Flood Dragon's Cave

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“If it’s a cave that’s at the summit of Thundercrash Mountain, it can’t be any other Thunder Lizard, it has to be the Thunder Flood Dragon. The Thunder Lizards of Thundercrash Mountain have distinct hierarchies that are based on strength. The strongest controls a territory at the top, where the power of thunder is the richest. Moreover, the peak is the symbol of absolute authority; how can the Thunder Flood Dragon let anyone else have it?”

Lin Ming’s mind raced wildly. The black-clothed martial artist said that Thunder Lizards kept thunder-attribute treasures in their caves so that the power of thunder in their caves would be more vivid.

If this truly was the Thunder Flood Dragon’s cave, what sort of treasures would be inside it?

Realizing this, Lin Ming’s heart began to ignite with overwhelming desire.

However, he also saw that in front of the cave, there were dozens of Thunder Lizards. Lin Ming paused; any one of these Thunder Lizards could take his life! Once they found him, he would die without even a burial.

As his heart went through a battle of wills, Lin Ming clenched his teeth. There was no fortune without danger! He would fight for it!

This was a once in a millennia opportunity. If it weren’t for the

woman in red appearing, even if Lin Ming broke through to the Xiantian realm, he would still have no chance of entering the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave!

Those that walked the path of martial arts were doomed to face countless perils and dangers. With Lin Ming's current talent and strength, he would definitely be able to reach the extreme Xiantian realm, and even go beyond that.

But how about higher? Could he ever compare to the mighty elders of the Realm of the Gods?

Lin Ming knew that Sky Spill Continent had a lot of geniuses. But in this universe, there were many worlds that were just like Sky Spill Continent; the number of talents could not be estimated simply.

With so many talents, some were born into fourth-grade sects, fifth-grade sects, sixth-grade sects, or even Realm of the God's sects or Holy Lands. They had unimaginable resources and materials to cultivate with. They were probably thrown into a miracle medicine jar after being born too. Growing up like this, they also had access to the best cultivation methods, and in the Holy Lands of the Realm of the Gods, the cultivation methods they studied weren't any different to his own!

In addition to these geniuses that were born into unfathomable backgrounds, there were many talents that underwent all sorts of adventures and had experienced all kinds of fortuitous encounters. In the world they lived in, they were the main characters!

With so many people, how many had truly reached the peak of martial arts?

Lin Ming didn't discount himself, nor was he blindly arrogant about his own abilities. He knew that the road before him was long and winding. But, whether or not he could reach the end, that was still unknown!

For those that cultivated martial arts, every day was a struggle against the heavens and against life! He could not waste a single second of his life, nor could he miss the opportunities that presented themselves in front of him!

Otherwise, when the day he would reach the limit of his cultivation and be forced to go through life and death closed door seclusion in order to break through the bottleneck and extend his own, comes, his martial arts path would most likely have reached its end.

Lin Ming gazed wholeheartedly at the fierce fight that was ongoing in the sky, and he took a set of gray clothes out of his spatial ring to change into.

There was no snow at the summit of Thundercrash Mountain, only endless crags of gray magnetic ores. If he wore gray clothes, it would be easier to not draw attention to himself.

By relying on his realm of returning to his true self and restraining the breath of his body, Lin Ming was like a gray leopard

as he silently bounded from one stone to another. He hastily rushed towards the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave!

Due to the monumental fight occurring in the air, no one noticed a mere human closing in on the summit's cave. No one could possibly imagine that there would be someone who had the courage to sneak into the cave and steal rare thunder-attribute materials.

After Lin Ming jumped onto the cliff, his hands clung onto the rocky exterior and he quickly scaled upwards like a gecko. At this time, only 3 or 4 miles from the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave, Lin Ming's spiritual sense had reached a high degree of concentration. From where he was now, he had already passed the boundary of danger. If any true essence fallout or backlash from the fight in the air landed on him, he would instantly die.

Although he was cautious, Lin Ming did not slow down in the slightest. Time was life! If the airborne battle reached its conclusion and the Thunder Flood Dragon expelled the woman in red and returned to his cave, Lin Ming would be deadlier than dead!

Fortunately, the woman in red was a complete power freak. With just the strength of one person, she was actually able to match the Thunder Flood Dragon and all of his descendants!

Lin Ming used a few dozen breaths to pass that 3 or 4 miles. Just as he was about to enter the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave, he spotted a massive Thunder Lizard standing not too far from the entrance. This Thunder Lizard's body was larger than a Blue Thunder Lizard; its entire body was a deep purple!

This Purple Thunder Lizard was a vicious beast at the same level as a Xiantian realm martial artist!

Lin Ming's eyelids jumped up. This overwhelming existence could extinguish his life in just a few breaths of time!

Lin Ming hid behind a large boulder, staring at the pitch-black cave entrance. His heartbeat was rapid. He was only a mere 200 feet from the cave, but this 200 feet was just like an insurmountable moat.

Looking at the Purple Thunder Lizard again, Lin Ming saw that the beast's total concentration was focused on the fight in the sky. Vicious beasts didn't have naturally sharp perceptions. In addition to that, it also had to lend its power and attention to help the Thunder Flood Dragon in its battle while protecting the other Thunder Lizards. Because of this, it hadn't noticed Lin Ming, who had restrained the breath of his body.

Bang!

A gigantic fiery red ball fell from the sky. That Purple Thunder Lizard and several other Thunder Lizards vehemently concentrated their powers to reinforce the lightning net and resist the fireball. But, the woman in red's attack was too strong. Even though the Purple Thunder Lizard had tried its best, its entire body quivered and it vomited blood.

"This is my chance!"

Lin Ming's eyes flashed, and he instantly launched Golden Rock Shattering the Void! Under the cover of explosive fire, he was like an arrow that flew through the cave's entrance!

After the split second when Lin Ming's figure disappeared, the explosions stopped. The Purple Thunder Lizard was severely injured by the attack; where would he have the time to notice some little guy running into the cave?

"I'm in! I made it!" Lin Ming's exultant thoughts echoed in his mind as his heart beat like a drum.

As he sped into the cave, Lin Ming noticed that the cave was jet black, but it wasn't dark. The walls of the cave were mounted with brilliantly luminescent giant pearls and some thunder-attribute minerals that glowed. The entire cave was bathed in a fairy-like light, utterly pleasing to the eye.

"This Flood Dragon is far too excessive; his avaricious greed is really true." Looking at the shinning illuminations from the giant mounds of treasure, Lin Ming sighed in his mind. In the mortal world, any one of these treasures would be worth well over 10,000 gold taels. Just the decorations that lined the walls were worth more than several million gold taels!

Of course, these were things that Lin Ming refused to grab as he had more important goals in his mind. He raised his vigilance to 120% as he cautiously made his way into the cave.

There was a very vibrant power of thunder in the cave, thick to the point that it almost became a tangible essence. If a thunder-attribute martial artist were to cultivate here, their cultivation speed would rise to 10,000 miles in one day.

As he turned a corner, Lin Ming only saw a bright purple light in front of him. “Mm? Thundergrass!”

Not too far away from Lin Ming, there was a thick patch of deep purple Thundergrass that was half the height of a human. At the tip of the grass there were tiny fist-sized fruits that sparkled with electric currents. The fruit was a dark, purplish black.

“Millennium Thundergrass!” Lin Ming’s eyes widened with joy. According to the descriptions in the Thundergrass Mountain pamphlet, this should be at least 1400 or 1500 years old. Its valuable was inestimable!

Lin Ming didn’t delay. He took the high-grade treasure saber out and filled it with the power of thunder, before cutting down the dark purple fruit to store it in his spatial ring.

As for the grass roots, Lin Ming didn’t take those. The Thunder Flood Dragon would look after them, and in the future, if his strength reached a level high enough, he would make another trip back. At that time, he wouldn’t need to sneak in.

After he collected the Thundergrass, Lin Ming didn’t tarry. He continued deeper into the cave, speeding down a hillside.

Soon, Lin Ming began to see a light. There was a giant stone chamber in front of him; this stone chamber was almost 1000 feet wide!

After entering the stone chamber, Lin Ming gasped. On the ground of the stone chamber, there was a field of over 100 Thundergrass, both large and small. Judging by the size of the Thundergrass, the smallest were several hundred years old, and the rest were over 1000 years!

Thundercrash Mountain had existed for 10,000 years; the Thunder Flood Dragon's age would be no lower than that. If it wanted to plant Thundergrass, wouldn't it be too easy to produce millennium Thundergrass?

As Lin Ming looked, he found that most of the Thundergrass fruits had been picked, and there were only 30 or 40 fruits left.

Ah, so that's how it was. The Thunder Flood Dragon used this patch of Thundergrass as his own personal 'vegetable garden'. It would wait for them to grow a bit, pluck and then eat them, and continue this cycle.

Not only did the Thunder Flood Dragon have the ebullient power of thunder in the cave, but it also had such great food to eat. This was such a wonderful life!

Lin Ming welcomed them all. He summoned some of his thunder, and within a few breaths of time, none of the fruits remained. All that was left were the grass stalks.



The 30 to 40 Thunder Fruits were all placed in his spatial ring. To Lin Ming, this was a bit too unreal. Over 80% of these fruits were over 1000 years old! If this were the periphery of Thundercrash Mountain, it would be as difficult as ascending to heaven to find these fruits. But, in the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave, harvesting them was like grabbing vegetables from the ground.

This was the advantage of a long life. Only if one lived a long time could they breed and raise such miracle medicine as this. Otherwise, if the period was too long, one would die before the medicine had turned ripe.

Time was of the essence. After Lin Ming harvested all the Thundergrass fruits, he continued forward. As soon as he left this stone chamber, Lin Ming arrived at another stone chamber. This stone chamber was even larger than the last; it was over 2000 feet wide!

Observing the stone chamber's walls and floor, it was obvious this stone chamber wasn't naturally formed, it was dug out.

According to how far in he had gone, Lin Ming estimated that he was already deep in Thundercrash Mountain. Only there would have enough space to carve such a large stone chamber.

The floor of this spacious stone chamber was covered with all sorts of precious furs. There were sables, raccoons, tigers, leopards, and all sorts of other rare animals; too many to count.

Some of these furs were placed into a section of the wall; this was obviously a bed.

“This Thunder Flood Dragon really knows how to enjoy life!” Lin Ming was speechless. This bedroom was 2000 feet wide, and collecting all that precious fur was reminiscent to the actions of humans.

Lin Ming was about to leave, when he suddenly discovered that there was an incomparably rich power of thunder coming from the bed. Li Ming’s mind stirred. He rushed over, and lifted a snow white tiger pelt up. Under the pelt, there was actually a purple gem embedded into the ground that was emitting a purple light. This gem was the size of a fist. The strangest thing about it was that it seemed to be sealing something that looked just like a beating purple heart.

## Chapter 207 – Plundered Treasures

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This sort of treasure wasn't recorded in the Thundercrash Mountain pamphlet. But, if it was something that the Thunder Flood Dragon cherished enough to place under his bed, it was definitely some extraordinary object.

Lin Ming bluntly pried the strange purple stone out and wrapped his fingers around it. He could feel that the jade-like stone was lukewarm to the touch, not ice-cold like he had imagined.

What surprised Lin Ming the most was that the flashing purple electric arcs around the strange stone were also temperate in nature. It was known that most powers of thunder are fiercely violent, destructive and of an uncontrollable nature. If it entered the meridians of a normal martial artist, they would often suffer serious injuries that took a long time to heal.

But the power of thunder emitting from this strange stone was gentle and pure, like a chaste summer girl. It was really inconceivable.

Lin Ming wanted to absorb it immediately, but if he did, his body would have absorbed too many different sources of power. Not only would that not increase his strength, it would also negatively affect the flow of his true essence.

Lin Ming placed the stone in his spatial ring.

In just a half incense stick of time, Lin Ming had taken the 30 to

40 Thundergrass Fruits and that strange purple thunder stone as well. There were simply treasures everywhere for his taking. Of course, Lin Ming had risked his life in order to get this opportunity.

After leaving the bedroom, there was one last stone chamber in front of Lin Ming. This stone chamber was much smaller than the last two, and it was only a few hundred feet wide.

After entering the stone chamber, Lin Ming's eyes instantly gleamed with delight. In front of him, there was a single bamboo about 10 feet tall. Its entire shaft was a deep, glossy purple. Its lush leaves were like sharp swords that grew upwards, and each leaf was about a foot long.

The edges of the bamboo leaves flashed with tiny arcs of purple lightning. Lin Ming only leaned over, and he was able to feel all the hairs of his body stand up from the electricity. This was the force field that was created by a formidable power of thunder.

Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo!

Lin Ming recognized this type of bamboo. He discovered a 900 year old red Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo with the black-clothed martial artist at the base of Thundercrash Valley. With the information that the black-clothed martial artist had provided, Lin Ming knew that there was also an older Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo somewhere on Thundercrash Mountain. It had been hiding in the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave!

Really, how could that avaricious Thunder Flood Dragon now have such a good treasure in his cave?

The Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo was almost 10 feet high, which meant that it was 9900 years old; it was almost as long as Lin Ming's Heavy Profound Soft Spear.

If there was a method where it could be specially processed, could this Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo be used to make a spear shaft?

Lin Ming began to pant.

The most difficult factor in constructing a spear was constructing the spear shaft. Normal wood was easily cut by swords or sabers, but metal aren't elastic enough. As for dark purple elastic iron and Heavy Profound Soft Silver, they took a very long time to forge, and because of the extremely specialized process, it was very difficult to make them into high-grade treasures.

In truth, the best material to make a spear shaft out of was spiritual wood!

For instance, this Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo.

Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo had the required flexibility. As for toughness, since the 900 year old Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo was already so difficult to cut with swords and sabers, even an early Xiantian realm master would find it difficult to destroy this 9900 year old Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo.

It's only weak spot was where it was connected to its roots. Not only that, it could only be cut with the power of thunder.

Just in terms of rigidity, it was an excellent material. And this material could naturally conduct true essence. Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo was simply a natural vessel for true essence to flow through, especially thunder-attribute true essence. If thunder-attribute true essence was poured in, not only would it be immeasurably smooth, it would also have an increased effectiveness!

Lin Ming's own true essence contained the power of thunder. If he was able to have a spear made of Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo, it would inevitably become even more alarmingly powerful.

Lin Ming licked his lips in excitement and he took the high-grade human-step treasure saber out. He flooded the sword with the power of thunder and fiercely chopped at the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo's roots.

However, even with this strike, there wasn't a single scratch.

Lin Ming was delighted. If even its weak spot was so tenacious, everywhere else must be more so.

Since time was running out, Lin Ming poured all of his strength into his next strike. The high-grade human-step treasure saber began to shine with thick arcs of electricity, and then, he slashed at

the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo's roots. This time, it was cut open a little.

Lin Ming retracted his saber and made several more saber cuts. Each strike was as intense as the first, and they hit the exact same spot. With every strike, intense lightning flickered against the stone walls of the stone chamber. Lin Ming's speed was becoming faster and faster. Finally, on the 22nd cut, he was able to chop the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo down.

After he placed the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo in his spatial ring, Lin Ming roughly dispersed his soul force to probe the cave. After determining there were no other treasures present, he launched his movement technique and rapidly fled from the cave.

During the time he had been robbing the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave, Lin Ming was able to hear the explosions of the fierce battle in the sky. He could even feel the faint vibrations that passed through the mountain and shook the ground. Obviously, the fight outside was entering its supernova period, otherwise, Lin Ming would never have dared to go into the cave so deeply.

If the sounds of battle ever began to die down, Lin Ming would have immediately fled from the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave.

Treasures were nice, but none of it compared to keeping his own life intact.

Thankfully, the woman in red's power was beyond his wildest imaginations. With just the strength of one person, she had been

able to face off against the entire Thundercrash Mountain without falling backwards.

The Thunder Flood Dragon cave was less than 10,000 feet deep. Compared to the cautious manner in which he entered, Lin Ming exited at full speed. This time, it only took a few breaths to reach the entrance.

As he approached the cave entrance, Lin Ming slowed down, and he completely restrained all of the breath of his body.

Lin Ming was like an octopus as he spread his soul force in all directions, probing the situation outside the cavern. Looking up, Lin Ming suddenly gasped. Outside the cave, there was blood everywhere. Thunder Lizards littered the ground, they were bleeding from their head, their life extinguished. They had been killed by the aftershocks.

As for the rest, most of them were wounded. Of the originally fierce Thunder Lizard army, over  $\frac{1}{3}$  had died, and the most of the  $\frac{2}{3}$  left were injured.

Seeing this scene, Lin Ming couldn't help but gulp. What sort of cultivation level was that woman in red at? She was simply terrifying.

Although the Thunder Lizard army was in extremely dire straits, Lin Ming didn't let relax his guard in the least. He carefully clambered to the top of the cave entrance, and waited for a big explosion to happen again. When that happened, he would seize



the chance to dash out.

From the cave entrance to the nearest outcrop was about 200 feet. But, this distance was completely exposed to the vision of every Thunder Lizard around. Lin Ming didn't dare to take this risk.

In the sky, the battle was going on in full swing. The Thunder Flood Dragon wasn't prevailing. Rather, he was constantly losing ground as the fight continued.

And the woman in red was actually winning this battle. Behind her, there appeared the faint fiery image of a giant blazing phoenix. The fire Yan Qi of the Primal Chaos Heavens had been twisted into four 1000 feet long flaming tornadoes; it was as if a red dragon was madly dancing around the woman in red, spanning the heavens!

Seeing this apocalyptic scene as if the heavens themselves were being broken asunder, Lin Ming's heart rapidly beat. In this sort of battle, even the aftershocks would be able to instantly kill him.

The woman in red waved her sword, and the four flaming tornadoes converged into one, forming a massive 10,000 feet vortex of flames that swept towards the Thunder Flood Dragon.

The Thunder Flood Dragon ferociously roared, purple arcs of lightning twisted all over its vast body. It was struck by the giant vortex of flame!

Bang!

The flaming vortex slammed into the Thunder Flood Dragon. The Thunder Flood Dragon fought back the searing pain that wracked its body and soared towards the woman in red. Its speed didn't seem to match its giant body; it was like a deep purple laser that shot forward.

The Thunder Flood Dragon had decided to battle the woman in red in close combat. The potent physical power of a Flood Dragon was well documented; it wasn't something that a human martial artist could compare with.

The woman in red coldly snorted. She flourished her crimson blade, and the shrill cry of a phoenix rang out into the night air. A flaming phoenix raced out from the sword's edge and tore towards the Thunder Flood Dragon.

Seeing the imminent fiery collision, Lin Ming decided to take advantage of the cover from this explosion to rush to the nearest shelter. There, he would be safe. But at this moment, Lin Ming instantly paled.

As the titanic forces in the air collided, the severed flame tornado that had struck the Thunder Flood Dragon hadn't dissipated yet. It fell, and the precise location to where it fell was where Lin Ming was!

"Damn!" Lin Ming's face turned green. How could he be so unlucky!? Although the true essence from the flaming vortexes

aftermath had dissipated, the scattering flames were still enough to illuminate his position!

Lin Ming didn't delay; he immediately turned around and he was about to run back into the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave to take cover; the flames shouldn't spread here. First, he would overcome this dilemma, and then, he would figure out how to proceed.

But just as he was about to launch forwards with Golden Roc Shattering the Sun, Lin Ming was shocked. The surrounding wind had been whipped up into a powerful whirlpool that forcefully sucked him into the fiery tornado!

Lin Ming had been caught up in that huge suction force, and his body was involuntarily sent flying into the air!

“This is bad!”

Lin Ming desperately forced out the maximum potential of Golden Roc Shattering the Void, but the suction force was too strong. He was no different to a leaf in a storm; even the concept of wind that let him flow through the air paled in comparison to this force.

Compared to this flaming storm, even the twelfth level of difficulty of the Seven Profound Martial House's Violent Wind Tunnel was not worth mentioning!

It was not only Lin Ming, there were also 7 or 8 deep blue

Thunder Lizards that were sent rolling into the air. Their bodies were several tens of thousands of jins and their strength was equal to a peak Houtian realm martial artist, but even they weren't able to resist this terrifying suction!

Hearing the hissing roars of the Thunder Lizards, Lin Ming's heart cried out with complaints to the heavens. He had actually been sent flying into the air with these fellows! If he wasn't burnt to death by the flames, he would probably be crushed to death by these 7 or 8 overly large fellows.

Lin Ming made the decision to activate the Heretical God Force. With the support of the compressed true essence, Lin Ming activated the 'True Primal Chaos Formula' to cover his entire body with the thickest true essence he could. In this moment of life or death, this was his greatest trump card!

As he finished this, Lin Ming felt something heavy hit his back. His organs trembled, and he spat out blood.

It had to be known that after Lin Ming had gone through the challenges of the life and death smelting trial, his body had been strengthened, and his defensive power had reached an amazing degree. If this single collision was able to make him vomit blood, it only highlighted the terrifying strength of this suction force.

Fu fu fu fu fu fu fu fu!

Lin Ming didn't have time to look back and see what had hit him; he had been swallowed up by that terrifying storm into the

flaming vortex. All around him was a bright scarlet red color; his surroundings had reached a scorching temperature that was able to instantly melt steel. Even the peak Houtian deep Blue Thunder Lizards could only let out pitiful screams as they were charred alive. Lin Ming's clothes were instantly turned to ash, and his entire body was bathed in a sea of flames. The feeling of death was close at hand!

## Chapter 208 – Returning With Riches

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In that moment, Lin Ming calmed down. He could feel the scalding heat and the burning pain fade away, and even the raging firestorm seemed to stand still. He could clearly perceive every sensation, even the painful roars of the Blue Thunder Lizards.

Calm down... calm down...

Lin Ming's breathing became gentle. His eyes closed as he entered into the ethereal martial intent state, his soul entering into a sea of utter tranquility.

At the same time, the true essence in his body began to revolve wildly. The Heretical God Seed beat in the same rhythm as his heart.

“Flame Essence!”

Lin Ming's eyes slammed opened. Without any more reservations, he completely thrust all of his true essence into his Flame Essence.

By relying on the Thunder Soul, Lin Ming could withstand even the thunder attacks of the Blue Thunder Lizards.

Then, with a similar concept, he could use the Flame Essence to resist the fiery doom of this flaming storm.

The sesame seed sized Flame Essence became Lin Ming's final hope!

“Hah!”

The power of fire contained in the Flame Essence erupted outwards!

Meanwhile, the fierce heat of firestorm flowed like a surging tide into Lin Ming's body. The two energies clashed within him!

This was the power of flame that was released by an extreme Xiantian master! It was the blaze of a true Vermillion Bird!

Lin Ming was only a mere peak Bone Forging martial artist. Even with the Flame Essence, it would be difficult to deal with!

The Heretical God Seed's power of fire was instantly and completely suppressed from the very outset of the energy collisions. Seeing that the firestorm would burn down his own meridians, at this crucial moment, Lin Ming let out a fierce cry; his eyes became the same deep amber shade of a Flood Dragon!

ROARRRRR!

A bass resonant roar issued forth from Lin Ming's body. This sovereign sound did not come from Lin Ming's throat, but rumbled forth from his entire body!

In that moment, behind Lin Ming, the shadow of an Azure Dragon appeared from nowhere. A vast and majestic aura filled with boundless vigor suddenly burst forth!

Fuuu!

Lin Ming's true essence manifested into a azure light that shot out like 10,000 swords towards the approaching firestorm!

This azure colored true essence had a hint of eternal immortality. Although its aura was far less potent than the firestorm, and even though it was engulfed by the fires of the storm, the azure true essence was not extinguished. It completely routed the flames in Lin Ming's body!

In this life or death crisis, on the precipice of doom, the True Azure Dragon's reverse scale blood that had fused into Lin Ming's heart had finally awoken!

In that moment, the Thunder Flood Dragon was attacking the woman in red with his claws. Suddenly, he heard the staggering roar of a dragon, and his vast body trembled. It was as if a fear that stemmed from the deepest shadows of his soul had spilled forth, flooding his entire body!

True Dragon!?

No... impossible! How could Sky Spill Continent possibly contain



a True Dragon!?!?

The Thunder Flood Dragon didn't even have the time to turn back; the woman in red's four-foot blood colored sword had already directly pierced towards him.

In a battle between masters, to be distracted was a fatal taboo!

“Die!”

The Thunder Flood Dragon opened its great mouth and a pure black thunder ball came out to attack the woman in red. At the same time, the woman in red's scarlet long sword had pierced the Thunder Flood Dragon's body!

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The firestorm spun Lin Ming and the 7 or 8 deep Blue Thunder Lizards away and they pounded onto the magnetic ore ground 1000 feet away from the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave. At this time, Lin Ming was as naked as when he was born, and many places on his body were charred black. His hair was burnt; he looked to be in an incomparably miserable state.

However, by virtue of the dominating power of the Flame Essence and the awakened strength of the reverse scale blood, Lin Ming was able to protect his meridians. Although he was injured in the firestorm, it wouldn't leave hidden wounds that would negatively affect his cultivation in the future. As long as he took

time to recuperate, he would be able to make a full recovery.

The 7 or 8 Blue Thunder Lizards, however, were in a wretched condition. If they hadn't been injured, they would have managed to survive barely, but these Thunder Lizards had already been seriously injured in battle. This time, they were caught in the firestorm, and their entire bodies were roasted black, they were half dead.

As Lin Ming landed, he bounced up and immediately turned around and ran!

The only thought in his mind was to leave Thundercrash Mountain as fast as he could, and run far far far away!

When he fell, the Thunder Lizards that were on the ground didn't have a chance to respond. When they did, Lin Ming had already run over 1000 feet away.

A dark Blue Thunder Lizard growled, and chased after Lin Ming intending to kill him. It faintly remembered that this human had come from the Ancestor's cave entrance. Did this human enter the Ancestor's cave?

Thinking this, the deep Blue Thunder Lizard became immeasurably angry. Not even the Purple Thunder Lizard had the right to enter the Ancestor's cave! A mere human dared to blaspheme them and trespass into their Holy Land?!

The dark Blue Thunder Lizard roared, and several other Thunder Lizards started rushing towards Lin Ming. They all gathered together to chase Lin Ming down and eviscerate him! These were high-quality beasts with the bloodline of a Flood Dragon; their bodies were extremely powerful. Even the explosive aftermath of a Xiantian masters attacks hadn't killed them!

Lin Ming activated his movement technique to the maximum. He dearly wished that he could spring forth a pair of wings and fly. Even though he had the top movement technique, Golden Roc Shattering the Void, his speed was still inferior to the dark Blue Thunder Lizards!

He was at the peak of Bone Forging and they were at the peak of Houtian; this was a full two realms difference in their cultivation levels. It was a deficiency that a top-tier movement technique couldn't make up.

Luckily, the Xiantian realm Purple Thunder Lizard was too strong and hadn't been sucked into that flaming tornado, otherwise, Lin Ming would already have died by now!

The 7 or 8 Thunder Lizards angrily rushed forwards. Especially the deep blue Thunder Lizard; it's power was equal to a half-step Houtian realm martial artist. It's speed was like lightning, it's horrifying agility was simply completely visually incompatible with its size.

Boom boom boom!

The deep Blue Thunder Lizard shattered the magnetic stone beneath its feet as it ran forwards at high speed. Its entire body was surrounded by crackling arcs of blue lightning; its running speed was nearly one and a half times faster than Lin Ming!

Even with the approaching threat that it would overtake him, at the moment, Lin Ming was incomparably calm. He remembered, there was a cliff not too far away.

If he rushed into the sky, it would be likely to attract the attention of the Thunder Flood Dragon. So, jumping off the cliff was the best choice!

Kacha!

The dark blue Thunder Lizard chasing him opened its mouth to spit out a dark blue thunder ball towards him. At the same time, Lin Ming saw that the cliff was only a few dozen feet away!

He leapt into the air, his body drawing an arc through the sky. He was like an arrow that had been shot towards the cliff!

Bang!

The blue thunder ball accurately struck Lin Ming. But the force of the blow also accelerated Lin Ming's movement.

Lin Ming forcefully suppressed the growing numbing feeling in his body as he conjured his true essence again. With the aid of the

concept of wind, his speed had reached an extreme!

The cliff was 10,000 feet high; Lin Ming couldn't even see the bottom. He was like a flying bird, jumping off the cliff!

Roar!

Roar!

As the 7 or 8 chasing Blue Thunder Lizards saw the cliff, they abruptly stopped. They stood at the edge of the cliff, mouths dripping with unbridled fury as they roared at the cliff bottom. The Thunder Lizards could not fly. Let alone the peak Houtian realm Blue Thunder Lizard, even a Xiantian realm Thunder Lizard could not fly. They could only do so if they awakened the true potential in their bloodline, becoming an avatar of a Thunder Flood Dragon.

Several of the Thunder Lizards were unwilling to let things go, constantly shooting blue lightning off the cliff. But by now, Lin Ming had already turned into a small spot in the distance. Besides the lightning attacks of two dark Blue Thunder Lizards, everything else missed.

The speed of the lightning was too quick. Because Lin Ming had also been injured, he was unable to dodge the two thunder balls.

Bang!

An intense numbing sensation surged within him. Even though Lin Ming had a Thunder Soul in him, he had been hit so many times that he spat out blood.

The whirring sound of air breezed past his ears. With just a few breaths of time, Lin Ming was already 1000 feet from the bottom.

Lin Ming clenched his teeth and ignored the injuries he had taken. Lin Ming fiercely moved his true essence and spread his arms outwards. An invisible force generated under Lin Ming's body as his falling speed suddenly decreased.

After a few moments, Lin Ming's speed had come to a complete standstill. He took a spare set of clothes out of his spatial ring and quickly put it on. With a wave of his hand, he landed on a rock, sliding down towards the bottom of the cliff.

Lin Ming then held onto a large tree that was at the bottom of the cliff, gasping for breath. Although he hadn't been in any intense fights, just resisting the firestorm a while ago had consumed most of the true essence reserves in his body.

As he recalled the azure colored true essence that contained a hint of eternally immortal breath, Lin Ming was secretly startled. Was that the power that came with the reverse scale blood?

He looked up at the cliff top. This cliff was 8000 feet high. If a Thunder Lizard really did think of jumping down, they would be turned into a muddy mess of flesh.

Not knowing how the battle between the Thunder Flood Dragon and the woman in red had ended, Lin Ming didn't dare to stop to heal his wounds. He forcefully suppressed the churning blood in him, and turned to run down the mountain. He wanted to immediately leave Thundercrash mountain in one go. If he ran 180 miles and changed directions a few times and then, hide in a bunch of tall grass, he didn't believe that the Thunder Flood Dragon could still find him.

Thinking of the harvest he had in his spatial ring, Lin Ming's thoughts heated up with delight.

These were the thunder-attribute treasures that the Thunder Flood Dragon had saved up for 10,000 years!

And yet, he had picked them like peaches. If the Thunder Flood Dragon discovered this, he was afraid that it would probably swallow him alive just to vent its anger.

With the aid of the concept of wind, Lin Ming was able to quickly descend the mountain. Because he was already far away from the Thunder Flood Dragon, he didn't need to be discrete. He launched his movement technique and leapt several hundred feet into the air; this ability was similar to flight.

After he passed the snow mountain region, he reached the mountainside. To Lin Ming, nothing here was a threat to him.

But at this time, Lin Ming actually felt a deep pain throb in his body.

“Damn, my injuries are flaring up.”

Lin Ming frowned. The lightning attacks from the Thunder Lizard weren't much, but the flames from the Vermillion Bird continued to grow. Although it had been overwhelmed before by the azure true essence, now it had suddenly resurged, like a wildfire that met a spring breeze.

If he had the support of the Flame Essence, Lin Ming wouldn't be too alarmed. But, the rogue fires in his body had already left the Flame Essence. With such a tenacious vitality, it really made him feel apprehensive.

With Lin Ming's current condition, let alone summoning that azure true essence, he didn't even know how much ordinary true essence he could mobilize.

“I can't forcefully restrain it again. Otherwise, I might damage my meridians. With wounds to the meridians, it will be very difficult to heal. It will leave behind hidden wounds that become a barrier for when I try to break through to Pulse Condensation.

Lin Ming took a pill out of his spatial ring and swallowed it. He decided to first leave Thundercrash mountain, and then, find a safe and hidden place to heal his wounds. Afterwards, he would devour the power of thunder from the rare treasures and materials he had obtained.

After eating up these rare treasures, just how strong would the



Thunder Soul in him become?

## Chapter 209 – Injured Maiden

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In a cave at the base of Thundercrash Mountain, Lin Ming was recovering from his injuries as he meditated. The residual flames of the Vermillion Bird had been difficult to deal with. Only after spending a great deal of effort was Lin Ming just able to suppress it forcefully.

After swallowing a medicinal pill, Lin Ming probed his body with his soul force; any hidden wounds were almost healed.

Lin Ming looked at the sky, the sun was setting over the horizon. Lin Ming intended to flee Thundercrash Mountain during the night and find a secret place to refine the thunder-attribute treasures he had picked up. It was a pity that he hadn't succeeded in obtaining the Thunder Soul, this caused Lin Ming to feel a bit of regret.

As he carefully made his way out of the cave, Lin Ming launched his movement technique. He was like a sleek cheetah as he made his way through the forest with only the sounds of branches breaking beneath his feet. In an instant, Lin Ming had already rushed forwards several miles into the distance.

The sun disappeared over the horizon, and the dim forest became completely dark. But this had no impact on Lin Ming's speed. After rushing several dozen more miles out, Lin Ming stopped in his footsteps. With his keen senses, he felt an overwhelmingly rich flame energy in the air.

Looking around, Lin Ming found that the surrounding ground was scorched black, and even the green leaves on the trees had been toasted into a withering yellow. They had apparently been roasted by a fiery air.

With all these signs of burned objects around him, Lin Ming was able to find obvious traces of flame, as if something flaming had gone deep into the forest.

Lin Ming hesitated for a moment before following the traces of flames for several steps. His eyes suddenly narrowed, "Blood?"

On the ground, there were some dark red bloodstains. And the deadwood and leaves surrounding the bloodstains had been burnt to ashes.

Lin Ming had a faint guess of what had happened. He restrained the breath of his body and sent out his soul force. Cautiously following the traces of flame, he only had to walk 2 or 3 miles before he suddenly froze in his steps.

In a clearing in the forest, a large red bird was sprawled on the ground, prostrate. This was the Vermillion Bird that Lin Ming had seen before.

This surprised Lin Ming. The Vermillion Bird's wing was actually broken! Blood constantly dripped from the wound. The bloodstains that he had seen in the forest were left behind by this injured Vermillion Bird.

Looking at the ebbing appearance of the Vermillion Bird, it looked like it received extremely heavy injuries. The flames of its body weren't as vibrant as they were before. Instead, they were like the flickering wicks of a candle flame just before it was extinguished.

Behind the Vermillion Bird, there was a woman in red leaning against a tree trunk. Her face was pale, her gorgeous eyes were closed shut and her long eyelashes were slightly trembling.

Her body was wrapped in fire and arcs of purple lightning. In the dark night, it was an especially dramatic image.

Obviously, she was also seriously injured.

Seeing this scene, Lin Ming's eyes widened in stupefaction. The woman in red had been suppressing the Thunder Flood Dragon in their battle, so how did the situation reverse and she take such a heavy injury? If she couldn't win, she could at least have fled. But even her Vermillion Bird mount had broken a wing. Did the Thunder Flood Dragon use an overwhelming final trump card? Or was there another awe-inspiring powerhouse that had arrived?

Lin Ming looked at the woman in red, and his expression changed several times, revealing his conflicting thoughts. He finally decided to return to where he came from. A powerhouse like this, even if severely injured, would still not find it difficult to kill him. Lin Ming didn't want to place his own little life in the hands of others.

Of course, he also thought that if he could help the woman in red cure her injury, she would have to owe him a favor. The value of a favor from a Xiantian realm master could be imagined.

But if she was a Xiantian realm master, she most likely have several miracle medicines and elixirs that she could casually bring out that were tantamount to his entire net worth. Why would she need his help in curing any injuries?

Just as Lin Ming took a step back, the woman in red opened her eyes. Her jet black pupils stared forth. In the dark night, her eyes were just like shining stars.

Lin Ming stopped, standing where he was. He hesitated for a moment, before respectfully calling out. “Greetings, Senior!”

“It’s you.”

The woman in red had already felt someone nearby. It was only because their cultivation level was not high that she didn’t care too much.

But, it seemed that she had run across the boy from Thundercrash Mountain.

This was the third time they had met, this was truly destiny.

“Do you know if there is a large Southern Tribe nearby?” The woman in red asked. Her voice frail, but it still revealed an innate

sense of prideful nobility.

“Yes, there is one 200 miles to the southwest.” Lin Ming said truthfully. He guessed that during the time on the summit, the woman in red had been too busy to bother with such a weak and unimportant person like himself. There was no way that she knew that he had already looted the Thunder Flood Dragon’s cave, so he didn’t worry that she would covet anything on him.

“200 miles...” The woman in red sighed, a sharp bitterness flashing across her face. She hadn’t imagined that one day, a dignified maiden of Divine Phoenix Island like herself would be stumped by a mere 200 miles.

Lin Ming became aware of the bitterness in the woman in red. He was surprised for a moment and then, he immediately understood. It was not only the Vermillion Bird whose wing was broken, but the woman in red was heavily injured too, to the point where even walking would be an painfully onerous task.

He was curious; how did this woman in red, who had been the one with the upper hand, suddenly suffer such a heavy injury? Of course, that was a question that he didn’t dare to ask.

Although it was unlikely, Lin Ming still politely asked, “Senior, is there any way that I can help you?”

The woman in red thought for a moment, and then asked, “This tribe that you mentioned, do they have any Heavenly Wind Eagles for sale?”

Lin Ming shook his head. “It’s only a small tribe, they wouldn’t have a mount like that. But, they do have horses....”

Lin Ming’s sentence trailed off as he glanced at the Vermillion Bird. Such a hefty bird, can a horse actually transport it?

The woman in red shook her head, her eyes flashing with disappointment.

She gently said, “Thank you.”

Then she stood up, and bent over to whisper into the Vermillion Bird’s ear. The Vermillion Bird opened both eyes and whined a few times, struggling to stand up.

The Vermillion Bird tried to use its wings to prop itself up, but because its left wing was broken, it lost its balance and almost fell to the ground.

The woman in red couldn’t bear to watch such a pitiful scene. With a bit of deep regret, she stretched her jade-white hand out and placed it on the Vermillion Bird’s chest, continuously pouring fire true essence into the Vermillion Bird’s body.

As the woman in red’s true essence was poured into the Vermillion Bird, the Vermillion Bird’s healthy appearance was restored a bit. But, at the same time, the purple electric arcs of lightning on the woman in red’s body became wilder and more

powerful. After more snaking arcs of lightning sprung up, the woman in red's face became increasingly pale.

Lin Ming had been clearly watching everything from the side. The lightning was obviously left behind by the Thunder Flood Dragon's attack, and the purple arcs of lightning were originating from within the woman in red's body.

Before, the woman in red had been using her own true essence to suppress the lightning in her body, but she didn't seem to achieve any success. Now that she had poured a part of her true essence into the Vermillion Bird, the lightning around her became immediately fierce.

If it was a force of thunder that even the woman in red could not suppress, then maybe....

Lin Ming had a faint guess. This speculation caused him to pant, and his heart began to beat like a wild drum!

Seeing the woman in red take a pill and limp towards the Vermillion Bird, leading it towards the southwest, Lin Ming opened his mouth and said, "Senior, may I have a look at your injury?"

The woman in red turned her head, looking at Lin Ming with surprise. Although this youth in front of her seemed somewhat mystical, and his strength far surpassed his current cultivation, she didn't think that there was any chance that he could possibly cure her injuries.



As the Thunder Flood Dragon went all out with his final strike, she could only use her thick true essence to barely suppress it. She had no other means to deal with it.

The woman in red had only wanted some of the Thunder Flood Dragon's blood to help the Vermillion Bird complete its evolution. She had even brought sufficient treasures and terms to equally exchange with the Thunder Flood Dragon. She had never imaged that this matter, which could not have been regarded too seriously, had caused the Thunder Flood Dragon to bet everything it had against her.

As the woman in red held the upper hand and was suppressing the Thunder Flood Dragon, it didn't even hesitate to use up the millennia Thunder Soul that it had been refining within itself for so long as its final strike.

If it was any common power of thunder, the woman in red would have been able to use her true essence to extinguish it. However, the Thunder Soul clung to life and refused to be smothered out. After entering her body, she had to transfer all of the true essence in her body to contain it. If she relaxed her guard just a bit, or used up any true essence, the Thunder Soul would immediately manifest, wantonly attacking the meridians in her body!

Because of this reason, she didn't even have the ability to fly now.

If she wanted to eliminate the Thunder Soul from within her

body, she could only do so at Divine Phoenix Island. But, Divine Phoenix Island was 500,000 miles from here. Thinking this, the woman in red's heart was filled with bitterness. With her current condition, she would die before she ever walked the distance.

The Vermillion Bird rushed out of Thundercrash Mountain in order to salvage its life. It had also been seriously injured and it had barely managed to descend the mountain; its left wing had been completely destroyed.

One person and one bird would easily attract attention from high-level vicious beasts in this beastly forest. The woman in red could easily deal with them, however, the problem was if they came in great numbers. If they did, the woman in red would have to use up an excessive amount of true essence, aggravating her injuries.

The woman in red didn't imagine that she would be placed in such a plight; it seemed that she had reached a dead end.

She said to Lin Ming, "Thank you, but no. You have no means to deal with my wound."

She guessed that Lin Ming came from some great family in the mortal world, and he probably had some sort of expensive miracle medicine on his body. But, she had many of these pill and elixirs, and hers were even better. However, all her medicines were nothing in front of the Thunder Soul.

Lin Ming knew that the woman in red wouldn't believe him. He

said, “Senior, I would just like to take a look. If I can’t do anything, I will naturally give up. With Senior’s wound as they are now, does Senior actually plan on take the Vermillion Bird with a broken wing to the human tribe? Or does Senior plan on staying in this vicious beast forest? I fear that both these plans are a bit dangerous.”

“I said, there is nothing that you can do about my injury!” The woman in red said impatiently. She was someone who was used to being in the superior position and listened to; she wasn’t used to others questioning her, especially about such an obvious matter.

This was just like a little child telling an sage doctor that he would help take his pulse and see what illness he had. That doctor would absolutely think that the little child was just playing around and whiling his time away.

If it weren’t because the youth was so young, the woman in red would even suspect that he was having improper thoughts to take advantage of the situation.

Lin Ming saw the woman in red’s evident impatience and grumpiness. He did have an ulterior motive in asking to take a look at her wound. It was because he wanted to examine the possibility of the Thunder Soul. He patiently said, “I just want to take a look. If I can’t do anything, you have nothing to lose. You’re a great Xiantian master, why would you be afraid of a little Bone Forging boy like myself?”

## Chapter 210 – Healing Wounds

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The woman in red frowned at Lin Ming. She had been born with an inherent dignity and pride. Now, with her current cultivation and status, her noble manner had already integrated into her being. That didn't mean she was arrogant, this was only a normal response. It was just like the impossible prospect of a supreme Empress obeying the orders of a common peasant, not to mention that the peasant was speaking such unrealistic words.

Lin Ming saw that the woman in red was silent, so he tentatively took a few steps forward. “Senior, if I may, can I suggest using my soul force to examine your injury?”

Hearing Lin Ming's inquiry, the woman in red expression became increasingly dark. Soul force was able to penetrate most objects, for instance, things like the human body, or clothes. If she lay down the true essence shielding her body, and let the other party scan her, it was no different than removing all her clothes. Everything would be visible.

How could she possibly agree to such a request? The woman in red coldly snorted, then turned around to walk away. With her identity and status, she would normally never come into contact with such a simple boy. They were people of completely separate worlds. If it weren't for today's special circumstances, these two would have never exchanged so many words.

Lin Ming saw the woman in red turn away. He rolled his eyes, and loudly said, “Senior, you were struck by the Thunder Flood Dragon's Thunder Soul, right!?”

The woman in red stiffened. In surprise, she turned her head to look at Lin Ming. Although she had guessed this teenager in front of her was some extraordinary person in the mortal world, she didn't think that he would have such good sight. Although he hadn't used any soul force to examine her, he was still able to correctly guess what sort of injury she had.

“How did you know?”

“Just a guess.” Lin Ming shrugged. His speculation was the start, but the restlessness of the Thunder Soul in the Heretical God Seed let Lin Ming be confident in his guess.

Seeing the woman in red hesitate, Lin Ming continued, “How about it? In any case, you'll find it difficult to suppress the Thunder Soul in your body any time soon. There's no point in abandoning any hope. In desperate situations, you should try everything. If it doesn't work, then there's no loss for you.

Hearing ‘desperate situation’, the woman in red's eyebrows slanted upwards. An invisible pressure suddenly rolled off from her body.

Lin Ming shrunk backwards. He knew that he had said something wrong, just like a peasant that had insulted an Empress. To say such words to an existence like her, his fate could be imagined. He hastily said, “I'm sorry, I spoke incorrectly.”

“Mm?” Seeing that Lin Ming did not feel distress under her

pressure, the woman in red was somewhat surprised. She was a maiden of Divine Phoenix Island and the bloodline of the Vermillion Bird flowed through her. If she didn't deliberately restrain her aura, those that came closer to her would usually feel a sense of discomfort.

This suppression originated from the depths of her special bloodline. Yet, this young body didn't even have the least bit reaction, it was really weird. Was it possible that he also had some special bloodline?

“How old are you?” The woman in red asked.

Lin Ming hesitated, and then, he truthfully said, “I'm one month from 16.”

He thought that his cultivation being at the peak Bone Forging stage at this age would surprise the woman in red, but he didn't think that the woman in red's eyebrows would only prick up a bit, sizing Lin Ming up once more, not looking too impressed.

Lin Ming ruefully smiled; it seemed that he had thought too highly of himself. In the eyes of this woman in red, his cultivation was only considered good, not stunning. Of course, Qin Xingxuan was half a year younger than him, and she had already reached the early Bone Forging stage a month or two ago. If Qin Xingxuan was his age, it wouldn't be strange for her to reach the peak Bone Forging stage.

The woman in red said, “Alright. I'll let you look once. But, when

you use your soul force, behave yourself!”

The woman in red’s tone was extremely harsh. To think that she, a master half-step into the Revolving Core realm, would actually agree to such ridiculous demands from a little boy and let him attempt to treat her. She really would be the laughing stock of everyone in the world.

“I understand.”

Lin Ming didn’t even have the courage to randomly scan her body with his soul force. Otherwise, this woman in red would start raging and probably kill him.

As Lin Ming walked over to the woman in red, he was able to clearly smell a delicate fragrance emanating from her body. Although this fragrance smelled very nice, Lin Ming didn’t dare to even breathe for fear that the woman in red would go crazy.

“Well... can you sit down first?”

The woman in red looked at Lin Ming, and then sat down. Although she felt that this young boy had some secrets on him, she had no hope that he would be able to help her.

When the Thunder Flood Dragon had used his final strike, he had poured his life essence and blood into the Thunder Soul. In addition to that, the Thunder Flood Dragon had nourished and refined the Thunder Soul in his body for many millennia. It could

be said that the Thunder Soul contained the origin will of the Thunder Flood Dragon, and it was equal to an unthinking avatar of the Thunder Flood Dragon.

Not even a master with Xiantian realm cultivation and thunder-attribute would be able to absorb this Thunder Soul.

The Thunder Soul also had immortal characteristics that refused to be extinguished. If she wanted to extract it without harming herself, she could only ask a Revolving Core Elder of her sect!

Lin Ming wasn't clear of the mysteries present; otherwise, he would hesitate to expose his secrets in order to risk the danger of absorbing the Thunder Soul. If he managed to arouse the interest of the woman in red, he would be finished if she decided to investigate him.

Lin Ming politely extended his soul force into the woman in red's body, carefully avoiding any sensitive regions. Quickly, he was able to discern the source of the power of thunder. It was exactly at the woman in red's heart. Without a doubt, this was where the Thunder Soul was hiding.

The heart was the weak point of a human. If the Thunder Soul was hiding in her heart, it would be extremely troublesome to deal with.

Lin Ming penetrated his soul force into her heart, and he saw a small purple Thunder Flood Dragon roaring and clawing as it made threatening gestures. It constantly generated purple arcs of



electricity from its body that constantly seeped into the woman in red's body.

“This is the Thunder Soul?”

Lin Ming could feel that his Heretical God Seed was becoming very excited; it wanted to devour this Thunder Soul!

“Mm? This Thunder Soul seems to contain a fiery soul... as if it is self-aware. Is this the Thunder Soul, or the Thunder Flood Dragon's soul?”

Lin Ming hesitated. At this moment, he discovered that there was a faint cage of flames that surrounded the small purple Thunder Flood Dragon, firmly trapping it. The small purple Thunder Flood Dragon continuously attacked the flame cage, biting at the bars in an attempt to tear it open.

This flame cage was a true essence seal that the woman in red had put in place. If it weren't for this seal, the small purple Thunder Flood Dragons spirit would have already broken into the woman in red's body, destroying everything recklessly.

Retracting his soul force, Lin Ming moved behind the woman in red. He sat down and put his hand on her back.

This action caused the woman in red to suddenly stiffen. Not in all her years had a man dared to touch her like this. “What are you doing?!”

Lin Ming confidently said, “I’m sucking the Thunder Soul out. My true essence is a thunder-attribute, so I might be able to absorb the Thunder Soul.

The woman in red was disgruntled. “You want to absorb the Thunder Soul with your cultivation? Even an ordinary Thunder Soul would ruin your meridians! This Thunder Soul has the inherent origin will of the Thunder Flood Dragon. Even thunder-attribute masters would be helpless, and you think you are enough? Hurry up and leave, I don’t have time to play with you...”

The woman In red’s words trailed off. To her amazement, she felt that the power of thunder that the small purple Thunder Flood Dragon released was being pulled by an invisible strength towards her back, as if it were being sucked away by the youth’s palm.

The young boy’s hand became extremely hot on her back. With his palm touching her, it was a very strange feeling.

This is...

The woman in red was stunned. Although this was only the power of thunder that was released by the Thunder Soul, it shouldn’t have been easy to absorb. Just how was this young man doing this?

At this moment, something more startling occurred. The woman in red discovered that the small purple Thunder Flood Dragon in her heart was become violently restless, as if it feared something

that was approaching. It no longer released the power of thunder. Instead, it put its full force into breaking the flame cage, wanting to escape immediately.

What was going on? What was the Thunder Flood Dragon afraid of?

The woman in red was shocked. Was it because of the youth behind her?

The small purple Thunder Flood Dragon was struggling with all its might, but there was an invisible force that had locked onto it. This force wasn't too strong, but it contained an immense pressure.

This pressure not only suppressed the Thunder Flood Dragon's soul, it also suppressed the Thunder Soul itself!

What was acting on the Thunder Flood Dragon's soul was the blood of the True Dragon. This was bloodline suppression of the Thunder Flood Dragon!

As for what was acting on the Thunder Soul itself, it was the Heretical God Seed's suppression!

Under this dual suppression, the Thunder Flood Dragon began to violently fear.

Lin Ming's true essence was nothing compared to the Thunder

Flood Dragon. But, this suppression had nothing to do with cultivation at all. This was akin to the law of suppression, not allowing any dissent or rebellion!

Chi chi chi!

The power of thunder was unceasingly siphoned from the small purple Thunder Flood Dragon's body. The Thunder Flood Dragon grew increasingly anxious and frightened, madly slamming against the flame cage. This caused the woman in red to bite her lips, her complexion becoming increasingly pale. She had used almost all of her true essence to maintain the flame cage, and her body was extremely weak at the moment.

However, at this time, Lin Ming didn't feel much better. Although the Heretical God Seed and the True Dragon's blood were dually pressuring the Thunder Soul, Lin Ming's cultivation was just too weak. This was like a little child that took two peerless treasure swords to deal with a wild tiger.

Lin Ming was able to absorb the power of thunder. This power of thunder was a trivial product of the Thunder Soul, but yet, it placed a huge pressure on Lin Ming. He was almost unable to suppress it.

“Hah!”

Lin Ming shut off his soul force and removed his right hand from the woman in red. He gasped for breath in great, heaving gulps. At this time, his right palm was completely covered in sweat.

The woman in red turned around, her beautiful pair of eyes blinking at Lin Ming. Her exquisite face was filled with a look of utter disbelief.

She hadn't imagined that this little boy would actually have a way to move the Thunder Soul. It had even managed to frighten the origin will that the Thunder Flood Dragon had left in the Thunder Soul! Although this boy's cultivation was only at the Bone Forging stage, it was the truth.

Of course, if the woman in red knew that during the battle on the summit of Thundercrash Mountain, the reason that the Thunder Flood Dragon had been suddenly distracted and allowed her to injure it was because this young boy had inexplicably gave out a fearsome True Dragon's roar, she would be shocked speechless.

## Chapter 211 – Peculiar Young Boy

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“What’s your name? May I know what school you are from?” The woman in red eyes twinkled as she looked at the drenched-in-sweat Lin Ming. She found it difficult to keep herself calm.

In addition to the fact that this youth did not fear the pressure that was brought about by the Vermillion Bird’s bloodline, he was even able cause the Thunder Flood Dragon’s origin will to feel a faint sense of terror; he was definitely a person of extraordinary means.

Perhaps there was something special about his body, bloodline, or soul. Or maybe, he came from some ancient mystical family.

Hearing the lady ask for his name and school, Lin Ming hesitated. He was prepared to give her the fake name ‘Mo Lin’ that he made up, but at this moment, the woman in red said, “There is no need to say it if you find it inconvenient.”

Although Lin Ming’s hesitation wasn’t very evident, the woman in red still noticed. If he had some special bloodline or came from a secret martial cultivation family, then he might be reluctant to disclose his identity.

“I saw you climbing Thundercrash Mountain before. Did you manage to ascend by yourself?” The woman in red casually asked.

“Yes. I am a thunder-attribute martial artist, so I have a very strong resistance to the power of thunder. Otherwise, there was no

way that I would have made it that far.” Lin Ming said with a self-deprecating smile as he wiped the sweat from his brow.

“Oh.” The woman in red inadvertently uttered. She was quite startled; the Thunder Lizards didn’t just have powerful thunder-based attacks, but their formidable bodies were extremely dangerous weapons.

Even if he had absolute immunity to thunder, a boy merely at the Peak Bone Forging stage would find it impossible to arrive at the snowy mountain region. This could only mean that this youth had a strength that far surpassed other martial artists at the same level of cultivation.

To reach peak Bone Forging before he was 16, this result was simply nothing to the talents of major sects and large aristocratic families. But, if his cultivation reached the peak Bone Forging stage, and he also had strength that surpassed someone at the same cultivation, then that was surprising.

There weren’t many young talents like this even at Divine Phoenix Island.

The two fell into a brief lull of silence. Lin Ming sat cross-legged on the ground, constantly revolving the True Primal Chaos Formula to suppress the violent power of thunder within himself. This Thunder Soul was simply disastrous to absorb. Not only that, but it also contained the origin will of the Thunder Flood Dragon within it. Otherwise, the woman in red would not have been left in such a powerless state.

As he circulated the true essence within his body, Lin Ming quickly entered into the ethereal martial intent state. His conscious control separated from his body, and his true essence began to spontaneously revolve through the most perfect route possible. His physical condition rapidly recovered. Meanwhile, the fiery power of thunder was also subdued by the Heretical God Seed.

The woman in red had also been sitting in meditation and recovering her condition, focusing on imprisoning the Thunder Soul within herself. Her eyes were glued onto Lin Ming as he practiced.

Martial intent?

She carefully observed him for less than half an incense stick of time to determine that she hadn't been mistaken. This boy, he had actually comprehended his own martial intent!

The woman in red gasped. She thought that he was just a trivial little boy of the mortal world, but he kept surprising her over and over again. First, he had suppressed the origin will of the Thunder Flood Dragon, then, his true strength and age came into an amazing contrast, and now, he had actually comprehended a martial intent!

It had to be known that the woman in red had reached the extreme Xiantian realm, and had even taken a half-step into the Revolving Core realm. To someone at her level, there were very



few things that could surprise her. Even the top geniuses of large sects and great families would only earn a little nod from her. Yet, in the mortal world, she had actually encountered a little boy that looked as harmless as a bunny, and yet, had so many impressive qualities.

A martial intent was exceedingly rare. In tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of martial artists, there might not be a single person that had comprehended one. It was an incomparably precious ability. It wasn't something that came from martial talent or cultivation. Rather, it could only be created by one's own hands.

If parents were talents, then their children would mostly be talented too. Large sects have gone through thousands upon thousands of years of accumulated development and the screening of individuals in order to produce countless talents. The strong enjoyed more resources, while the weak were eliminated. The ones that remained were the elite of the elite. The children of these extraordinary characters would also be extraordinary.

While being an amazing talent, they would also have limitless precious pills and rare elixirs growing up. They could use true essence stones as they pleased, have top-tier cultivation methods and skills, and also have the best master and teachers. This person was destined to set foot into the Xiantian realm. Even if an average person of the mortal world cultivated for a lifetime, they still wouldn't even touch their toes; this was the result of the difference in birth.

But even to these young talents of large sects, for a 15 year old to reach the Bone Forging stage or Pulse Condensation period, and

simultaneously comprehend a martial intent, this sort of thing could only be considered serendipity.

One's heart of martial arts and martial intent were related. The purer and more substantive one's heart of martial arts, the higher their chances of being able to comprehend a martial intent. But to the majority of geniuses in the large sects and families, they had lived their lives peacefully and were free of worries. At the start of their path, their parents had already paved their road with riches. By only traveling across vast, flat lands, how could they possibly have a strong heart of martial arts?

To those that had suffered the tribulations of torment and suffering, traveling the bumpy road of life, being born short of resources and not even having much marital talent, it would be difficult for them to break through to the Pulse Condensation period even in their twenties. However, it wasn't too strange or fearful for someone like this to comprehend a martial intent.

But this young boy in front of her, he was so young and yet so ridiculously strong for his cultivation. Not only that, but he had also comprehended a martial intent. He was simply an evil omen, a monstrous genius!

Not having realized it, the woman in red's gaze had filled with curiosity.

This boy had some many unusual secrets; just who was he?

A quarter hour quietly slipped by. Under the help of the ethereal

martial intent, Lin Ming was able to quickly suppress the restless power of thunder within his body. He rose up, saying, “Let’s go. If I remember correctly, there’s a cave not too far away that we can hide in. During the night the forests of the Southern Wilderness are haunted by vicious beasts; if we stay here we won’t have a decent rest.”

Because most of the power of thunder within the woman in red’s body was siphoned off by Lin Ming, she had returned to a passable condition. She took out several miracle medicines to feed to the Vermillion Bird, and then woman and bird followed Lin Ming forwards.

“That’s right, I forgot to ask, did the Thunder Flood Dragon die?” Lin Ming suddenly thought of this, asking.

“It’s not dead. But, it’s injuries are heavier than mine, and I’ve killed off most of its descendants.” The woman in red casually said.

“Oh.....” Lin Ming let out a breath. Good thing he had run away quickly, or else he might have died in the aftermath if he stayed on the mountain summit. He didn’t believe his defensive capabilities were better than the Purple Thunder Lizard.

“If it hasn’t died then we should be careful.” Lin Ming said as he walked in front of the woman in red. He had been backtracking on the traces of flames that were left behind by the Vermillion Bird. The traces hadn’t disappeared and were far too obvious.

The woman in red followed Lin Ming in consternation. Although

her cultivation was 108,000 miles from Lin Ming's, in terms of experiences within the night forest and life skills, her ability was lacking compared to Lin Ming. She was usually flying in the sky; there was never any time she had to pass through a forest on foot.

As they walked, Lin Ming neatly cleaned up any traces of their path, and also took a moment to hunt a blue-eyed deer. For the several days since his adventure on Thundercrash Mountain, he had only been surviving on dried rations and water from his spatial ring; he was getting sick and tired of the bland taste.

The two quickly arrived at the cave. The interior was extremely humid and wet. Lin Ming lit a fire, and looked for some dry hay to spread on the ground. He apologised to the woman in red, "Sorry, this might be a bit of an inconvenience for you."

Afterwards, he took out a knife and began to skin the blue-eyed deer. His hands moved like the wind. The manner in which he sliced open the deer seemed chaotic and messy, but after several minutes, Lin Ming actually grasped at it and, with his hand, extracted more than a dozen strips of white tendon from the deer.

The woman in red's eyelids jumped. It seemed that Lin Ming hadn't been randomly cutting with his knife, but had actually been removing the white tendons from the blue-eyed deer. These white tendons crisscrossed each other and were woven like a net. To remove them was an extremely tedious and complicated task.

But Lin Ming had used a very short time to complete this, and not only that, but the white tendons that he pulled out hadn't broken, the flesh had been cleanly sliced off.

The woman in red was a bit clueless on how it had been done. To achieve this level of finesse, one would have to be very familiar with the body structure of the blue-eyed deer, and also have to undergo years of knife training. This was something that only a chef would ever do.

What was this? Why would such a talented martial artist be a chef? And looking at the way his knife had achieved such a consummate degree of skill, this young boy had probably been a chef for many years already.

Lin Ming saw the woman in red blankly gazing at the white strips of tendons in his hands and explained with a smile, “Blue-eyed deer has a very good flavor, but it has too much coarse tendon; it will affect the taste, so it’s best to take it out.

As Lin Ming spoke, his hands weren’t idling. He used the knife to cut open the deer and dress it. Then, he made a few more seemingly random cuts and pulled out a pile of bones.

Lin Ming then took out a thick branch, hung the blue-eyed deer on it, and began to grill it over the fire.

The woman in red found that the deer Lin Ming had hung over for grilling had already been neatly marked and patterned by Lin Ming. The distance between every cut was even; it was extremely neat and structured.

Seeing this, her expression became increasingly strange. What

sort of background did this young boy have? If she didn't know of Lin Ming's strength, she would have really thought he was some famous cook.

After a quarter-hour passed, the deer meat began to turn into a glazed, golden yellow color. A little bit of fat had been melted by the flames, dropping into the fire below with a sizzling sound.

As for the white tendons and bones, Lin Ming didn't waste any of it. He took out a pot from his spatial ring and placed the bits into it with some water, then placed it over the fire to cook as soup.

The soup boiled; the barbecue was sweet and savory.

Soon, the cave was filled with a delicious fragrance. Even though the woman in red primarily ate vegetables, she was unable to stop drooling as she smelled that delicious aroma.

As for that hefty Vermillion Bird, it began to restlessly fidget. It even seemed to have forgotten that its wing was wounded. Its brilliantly flame-colored eyes were locked onto the barbecue in Lin Ming's hand as if wishing it could swallow it down whole.

Because the flame had roasted the meat, the cuts on the deer meat had risen; just looking at it caused one's appetite to increase.

Even though it had been grilled for so long, there was not a single charred bit on the barbecue. It was a delicious golden-brown, glistening with melted fat. The woman in red was impatiently

waiting. Of course, she was careful to conceal her eagerness and continued to appear tranquil and calm.

At this time, Lin Ming took out a collection of bottles and jars from his spatial ring. After opening them, it turned out to be salts and various other spices that were purchased at the southern tribes.

When Lin Ming ran into the Na sisters, he had been buying salt at a southern tribe.

## Chapter 212 – Thunder Soul Evolution

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Lin Ming looked at the wide variety of seasonings and chose some to sprinkle on the barbecue. He had a very relaxed and enjoyable expression as he moved. The woman was completely speechless; was this really a martial artist? She had never seen a sect elder or any talented disciples ever bring out seasonings and pots when going out on adventures. This was more like a chef than an actual martial artist.

After a considerable amount of time, the woman in red finally heard the long awaited words from Lin Ming, “It’s done grilling, you can eat it.”

“Mm, yes.....” The woman in red seriously nodded, and then immediately asked, “How do I eat this?”

This blue-eyed deer was so large; obviously, there was no way she could use her mouth to bite into it.

Lin Ming was stunned for a moment. He sent her a strange look; did she not know how to eat food? Why would she ask such an idiotic question? He patiently replied, “Of course you eat by biting. Here, this is yours.”

He tore off a piece of the deer leg and thrust it towards the woman in red.

The woman looked at such a large chunk of meat and was directly dumbfounded. She had never eaten something like this



before. Was she supposed to use her hands and gnaw on it?

“Is there something wrong? You don’t like barbecue?” Lin Ming asked her with some puzzlement, seeing that the woman in red still hadn’t taken it.

The woman in red didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. She awkwardly received the barbecue slice. As she attempted to take a bite, she saw that Lin Ming was staring at her.

The woman in red’s cheeks flushed. She turned around and used her sleeve to hide herself as she gently took a small bite.

Lin Ming was left speechless. Wouldn’t she be tired from eating like this? Exasperated, he didn’t care too much. He tore off a piece of the deer thigh and chomped on it.

The woman in red was focusing on eating the tender deer meat. Oil flowed through her lips and teeth, and the fragrance flowed into her mouth. At this moment, she had a strange feeling; delicious, this was just too delicious.

In fact, people that originated from large sects and families would rarely eat food like this. They mostly eat spiritual food and spiritual vegetables that were filled with abundant heaven and earth origin energy. They could be the abundant treasure troves of sects. They grew while continually absorbing heaven and earth origin energy which embedded into the fruits and vegetables themselves. Eating food like this long-term was advantageous to enhancing one’s cultivation and accumulating Xiantian air.

As for the food of the mortal world, such as barbecue, it was considered to be contaminated with the foul Houtian air; it wasn't good for eating.

Therefore, this was the first time the woman in red had eaten barbecue.

"How does it taste?" After eating dry rations for several days, Lin Ming's appetite was hearty. He tore down a big chunk of eat and ambiguously asked his question. He had full confidence in his cooking skills.

"It's very tasty, but...how do you know how to prepare food?" The woman in red swallowed a bit of meat and sent a puzzled look towards Lin Ming. This little boy was just too mysterious.

Lin Ming continued eating the barbecue. He replied without looking up, "My family owns a restaurant."

"Uh...." The woman in red suddenly choked on her food, "What did you say?"

"My parents own a restaurant, that's how I know how." Lin Ming looked up. He didn't feel this was anything to be surprised about.

"No...I see." The woman in red was bewildered. She thought that Lin Ming originated from some profound martial cultivation family, but....restaurant? Will a martial cultivation family open a

restaurant?

Did this imply that he was thoroughly a mortal?

A mortal, whose cultivation had managed to reach the peak Bone Forging stage before he was 16 years old. This was simply a talent that went against heaven's will. What was his martial talent? At least a medium sixth-grade?

A sixth-grade talent would be considered a top-tier even within Divine Phoenix Island. In the mortal world, the probability of this happening was simply too small; there might not even be one in a billion!

If he was really a mortal, then she could try to pull him into Divine Phoenix Island!

Thinking this, the woman in red asked, "Where do you study your cultivation method from?"

"The Martial House..." Lin Ming hesitated before he responded.

"Oh...." Hearing this reply, the woman in red was somewhat disappointed. Some sects, in order to increase their own strength and numbers, would open Martial Houses in various countries, and select the most outstanding talents to enter their sect. This youth was probably already chosen.

Perhaps he was some personally trained core disciple. Otherwise,

no matter how great his martial talent was, it would be impossible to reach the peak Bone Forging stage before the age of 16.

“Mm...good soup.” Lin Ming felt it was about time, so he took the lid off the pot. A rich aroma wafted into the air.

He scooped a bowl and handed it to the woman in red.

The woman in red lowered her head and blew away the steam, before gently sipping it. This soup really was quite delicious.

A blue-eyed deer could be made into barbecue, but it could also be made into soup. The barbecue was a bit greasy, but when complemented with the tasty, clear and cleansing soup, it was simply perfection.

Lin Ming also took a full bowl. But at this time, the Vermillion Bird who had been nesting in a corner let loose a few whines while looking towards Lin Ming with a pleading expression. Lin Ming turned and saw the Vermillion Bird gazing at him with a pitiful expression, its crimson eyes wide and sad. It was eagerly staring at the grilled deer over the fire.

Lin Ming grinned. He took a chunk of the deer and walked over. The blue-eyed deer was over 100 jins; even if Lin Ming ate just the leg, it was more than enough. The leftovers were originally prepared for the Vermillion Bird. But looking at the lamentable Vermillion Bird, Lin Ming's mind stirred with some sly thoughts. He said, “Big bird, I can give this barbecue to you, but leave behind a feather for me. In any case, you won't be able to fly any time

soon.”

The Vermillion Bird was a Saint Beast from the lineage of the Phoenix. An adult Vermillion Bird could bath in fires and be rebirthed through Nirvana. However, this young Vermillion Bird did not have such an ability, but, restoring its broken wing was still possible.

The feather of a Vermillion Bird was very beneficial for refining a Flame Essence. Chi Guda had initially invaded Blackwater Swamp with his army in order to seek a feather of the Vermillion Bird. This was an opportunity that Lin Ming didn't want to miss.

Although the Vermillion Bird couldn't speak, it was still able to understand Lin Ming's words. It hesitated for a moment, glancing at the barbecue in Lin Ming's hand, and then at its own beautiful feathers. It clenched its beak and nodded.

The woman in red didn't know whether to laugh or cry. She hadn't known before now just how gluttonous a creature this Vermillion Bird was. It offered its cherished feathers at too cheap a price. Of course, a few feathers weren't much; it would easily regrow them.

As the Vermillion Bird screeched in sorrow, Lin Ming plucked out a large feather and beamed with joy as he placed it in his spatial ring.

Although the Vermillion Bird was heartbroken, the attractiveness of the barbecue was simply too alluring. It quickly

gobbled down everything it could.

Thinking of the feather in his spatial ring, Lin Ming thought this was quite funny. How would Chi Guda feel in the netherworld if he knew that he had traded some barbecue for a Vermillion Bird feather – something that him and his entire army couldn't obtain? He would probably be so mad he would die again.

Lin Ming turned to look at the woman in red and said, "You eat first, there are a few things that I have to do so I'll be leaving for a while. After some time I'll come back and heal your wound. If it's convenient, can I have your sound transmission information?"

The woman in red had a Thunder Soul inside her chest; Lin Ming didn't want to accidentally lose her.

"Mm." The woman in red could only place her hope in Lin Ming at this moment. She was accustomed to relying on her own strength, but now that she had sunk so low, her thoughts were in turmoil. If she hadn't met Lin Ming today, her only course of action would be to bring the severely wounded Vermillion Bird and walk through the forest. She wouldn't even have had a place to settle for the night.

The woman in red gave Lin Ming her sound transmission information and also some sound transmission talismans. These sound transmission talismans were quite impressive, it could be used from several thousands of miles away. This caused Lin Ming to sigh with emotion. A large sect truly was different. Since he was a child, the sound transmitting talismans couldn't even cover 100 miles; they weren't much use after he left Sky Fortune City.

The reason for Lin Ming wanting to avoid the woman in red, thus leaving, was to find a place to absorb the Thundergrass, and grow the Thunder Soul in his Heretical God Seed.

He wasn't afraid that the woman in red might covet his Thundergrass; this kind of thing probably wouldn't even enter her eyes. But, he didn't want this woman in red to guess that he had entered into the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave.

The small Thunder Flood Dragon in the woman in red's body was too vigorous and contentious. Although Lin Ming was able to deter it, he couldn't absorb it. He planned to enhance his Thunder Soul within his Heretical God Seed first, and then come back to deal with it.

After he found a secluded place, Lin Ming took out the millennium Thundergrass Fruit and continuously guided the power of thunder into the Heretical God Seed.

Time slowly passed. The flashing lightning arcs on the Thundergrass Fruit began to gradually die down, before completely shriveling as Lin Ming absorbed it into his body.

Lin Ming opened his eyes. Examining his Thunder Soul, he was immediately delighted. The power of his Thunder Soul had increased by about 10%; millennium Thundergrass was simply too different.

It took around a quarter hour to absorb a Thundergrass Fruit. Lin

Ming decided to continue until dawn, absorbing them unceasingly.

Lin Ming slowly entered into the ethereal martial intent state. The power of thunder was pulled into his true essence and spontaneously entered into Lin Ming's meridians as they circulated in a perfect route. Purple arcs of lightning constantly flashed around Lin Ming, and the surrounding vegetation was scorched black.

The Thunder Soul continuously grew; it had previously been less than an inch but currently, it was the length of an adult's finger.

The night was deep with the bright moon hanging in the boundless sky. The forest sounded with countless insects and the occasional beastly roar. Where Lin Ming was hiding, there were a few vicious beasts that had thoughts about ambushing him, but after feeling that crazy power of thunder that twined around him, they instantly shrunk back and ran as far as possible.

As dawn approached, the last Thundergrass Fruit withered away as it was absorbed by Lin Ming. The Thunder Soul in his Heretical God Seed had grown to a full half a foot.

At this moment, the Heretical God Seed began to fiercely shudder. The purple Thunder Soul began to emit a bright purple light as it quickly shrank, becoming shorter. Eventually, the Thunder Soul's final appearance was similar to a small steel needle.

Before, the Thunder Soul looked as if it were a purple snake



swimming in the air. But now, the Thunder Soul was completely straight like a needle, quietly suspended within the Heretical God Seed, with the purple light contained inside.

It didn't look like thunder, but more like a material object.

Although its shape was tiny, the dense cold aura emanating from the steel thunder needle let Lin Ming clearly know that this little thing's striking power was absolutely deadly!

'The Thunder Flood Dragon was able to control the Thunder Soul within its body to attack. Can I do the same?'

With that thought in mind, Lin Ming used his soul force to contact the Thunder Soul. As soon as his mind moved, the small needle that was quietly suspended in the Heretical God Seed instantly vanished.

In the next moment, an almost invisible tiny purple light flashed forwards from Lin Ming's fingertips. With an unimaginable speed, it penetrated a large tree just across from him and instantly returned to Lin Ming's body as if nothing had happened.

Fu!

The fiery purple thunder had shot out without any warning. In that instant, the entire large tree had been turned into charcoal!

Seeing this scene, Lin Ming was stunned. The attack power of the

Thunder Soul had surpassed his wildest imaginations. Moreover, the key was the compressed purple radiance; its speed was simply frightening. Someone who didn't have an extremely keen perception would never be able to see the trajectory of the Thunder Soul's attack!

Could such an attack kill Ouyang Dihua? Lin Ming was reminded of this enemy that had almost killed him.

After he absorbed the Thunder Soul from the woman in red, he would head back to settle this blood debt.

# Chapter 213 – Magnetic Birth Stone

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As the sun gradually rose from the horizon, Lin Ming had finished zealously cultivating the entire night. When he stood up, he discovered that all of his clothes had already been incinerated into nothing but ashes. Throughout the whole night, Lin Ming had been shining and sparking with the power of thunder; normal fabrics like cotton couldn't withstand the flaming sparks produced by the thunder.

As for the Thunder Soul in his Heretical God Seed that had taken on the shape of a steel needle, Lin Ming was filled with a sense of accomplishment.

Thunder Souls and Flame Essences were also divided into different grades. It was only because there were too few of them, thus, it was simply out of reach for most people. That was why the specific grade divisions weren't well known.

Lin Ming guessed that the Heretical God Seed's Thunder Soul had evolved, but he didn't know just how much it had.

As he took out a new set of clothes from his spatial ring and hastily dressed himself, Lin Ming launched his movement technique and ran through the forest, rushing towards the cave where the woman in red was waiting.

.....

At daybreak, the woman in red opened her eyes from a night of

meditation. Her current condition was much improved from the horrendous state she had been in last night. The Thunder Soul still lurked inside her body, but it no longer attacked the flame cage like it had last night.

Looking in front of her, the woman in red gazed at the still burning firewood. She smiled with a bit of self-deprecation. If she hadn't run into this strange young boy, then she would have suffered last night. She wouldn't have been able to make it out of the forest in time, and there wasn't anywhere to rest. She would also have had to deal with the continuous bother of vicious beasts and poisonous creatures. Although this wasn't in any way life-threatening, but after a night of tossing and turning, she would be bone-deep exhausted by the next day. It would have been much more difficult to suppress the Thunder Soul inside herself.

At this moment, she heard the sound of twigs breaking from outside of the cave. The woman in red knew that the young boy had come back.

‘Mm? It's only been one night, but his strength has increased....’ The woman in red was stunned as she looked at Lin Ming. Although his cultivation was still at the peak Bone Forging stage like before, the aura on his body was faintly different, a bit more compelling. The woman in red found she had understood Lin Ming less and less; this young boy just seemed to have a myriad of mysteries contained within him.

“Are you feeling better? Let's begin healing your wound. For the next few days we'll try to drive out the Thunder Soul within your body,” Lin Ming said.

“Mm. Alright. This time I’ll help you,” The woman in red said with a bit more positivity. Although she didn’t believe that Lin Ming had any way to deal with the Thunder Soul, she hadn’t used her true essence to assist him, so Lin Ming’s true essence had quickly depleted.

“Great!” Lin Ming was happy. With the help of the woman in red, it would be much less difficult.

Seeing Lin Ming’s face light up with happiness, the woman in red’s mind stirred. She asked, “Are you planning on absorbing the Thunder Soul and using it for yourself?”

Lin Ming blinked, and then nodded. There was no way to hide this matter.

The woman in red shook her head. She said, “This Thunder Soul is called the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. It began as an ordinary Thunder Soul that was swallowed by the Thunder Flood Dragon and was refined within its body for thousands of years. According to division of grade, it is a low-grade Earth-step Thunder Soul.”

“Thunder and lightning are one of the most violent and savage energies between heaven and earth. This is especially true of the Thunder Soul. It will destroy anything that comes near it, and it will be surpassingly difficult to subjugate it for your own use. A low-grade Earth-step Thunder Soul can only barely be absorbed by a middle Xiantian realm master. Not only that, but they would

have to expend a great deal of their energy. Your strength right now is too weak. If you try it, it will explode your meridians.”

Lin Ming’s heart sank as he heard this. He didn’t think that the Thunder Soul would be so fierce.

Yes, the Heretical God Seed was able to suppress the Thunder Soul and the blood of the True Dragon was able to suppress the Thunder Flood Dragon’s primordial soul, but even with this dual suppression, he wasn’t fully confident that he could suppress the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. This was just like a little child taking two peerless godly weapons to challenge a dangerous vicious beast; whether it would be victory or defeat was unknown.

The woman in red said, “There might have been a way if this was an ordinary Thunder Soul, but this Thunder Soul has already reached the low-grade Earth-step ranking, and it also contains the blood essence and origin will of the Thunder Flood Dragon, so it is much more difficult to deal with. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have been placed in such a miserable condition.”

Lin Ming forced a smile. Indeed, the woman in red was astonishingly strong, yet she still couldn’t do anything about the Thunder Soul. Even with her help, the most he could do was expel the Thunder Soul from her body; absorbing it was just too ambitious.

He suddenly remembered something, and asked, “A low-grade Earth-step Thunder Soul is also of great value to a Xiantian realm martial artist. Don’t you wish to obtain it too?”

The woman in red shook her head and said, “My body refined with a fire spirit, I was born with pure fire true essence. It is simply impossible for me to subjugate the Thunder Soul. As for taking it away for someone else, that is also a good choice. But....with my current state, even making it out of here is a problem. The Thunder Soul cannot be placed in a spatial ring; otherwise, the dimension inside the spatial ring will be shattered by it!”

Lin Ming drew in a cold breath. He hadn’t thought that the Thunder Soul would be fierce. It seemed that he had been too naïve.

“Is there no other way? For instance, sealing the Thunder Soul.”

The woman in red shook her head and said, “If there weren’t the origin will that was left behind by the Thunder Flood Dragon, then I would be able to seal it. But now that it’s in my body, I cannot do anything against it unless I have the Magnetic Birth Stone that the Thunder Soul was bred in.”

“Magnetic Birth Stone? What’s that?” Hearing this, Lin Ming’s mind stirred. Could it be....

The woman in red continued, “The Thunder Soul is an existence that is conceived from thunder origin energy. When it was born, it was wrapped within a mystic stone. Then, the Thunder Soul would slowly break free from the stone. This stone is the Magnetic Birth Stone that the Thunder Soul was born within. Because they were

born together, they can perfectly fuse as one. As long as the Thunder Soul enters the Magnetic Birth Stone, it will naturally become docile.”

Lin Ming’s heartbeat accelerated as he listened, “What does the Magnetic Birth Stone look like?”

The woman in red looked at Lin Ming in puzzlement. “Every Thunder Soul’s Magnetic Birth Stone is different. I don’t know what sort of appearance the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder’s Magnetic Birth Stone looks like.”

Lin Ming took a few deep calming breaths. He had a growing suspicion that the mystical purple stone he had found under the Thunder Flood Dragon’s bed was the Magnetic Birth Stone!

Although he had the Magnetic Birth Stone, he was still far from being able to absorb the Thunder Soul. Unless, the woman in red was willing to help him seal away the Thunder Soul; that was the only hope that he had. Still, could he trust her?

The woman in red noticed Lin Ming’s change in expression and faintly realized the reason. She tentatively asked, “Do you have the Magnetic Birth Stone?”

Lin Ming hesitated for a moment, before taking out the mystical purple stone from his spatial ring. “Is this it?”

The woman in red was completely stunned. Looking at the



glittering, translucent crystal stone exuding a faint purple light; it was just like a gem. It appeared like a living, beating jewel; a magnetic embryo. She was speechless for a long time.

Even though she had originally queried Lin Ming, she didn't think that he actually had the Magnetic Birth Stone. Something like this was definitely only found within the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave. Could it be that he had entered the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave?

With this thought, the woman in red's eyes changed as she looked at Lin Ming. A mere little boy with a Bone Forging cultivation actually snuck into the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave. What sort of concept was this? This was simply absolute audacity; his guts were greater than the sky!

And what was most amazing was that he survived, even stealing away the Magnetic Birth Stone!

Massive waves surged through her heart. This young boy had obviously taken advantage of the time when she had been battling the Thunder Flood Dragon in order to sneak into the cave. But, who would have the courage, wisdom, and spirit in order to grasp such an opportunity?

In that chaotic battlefield, there were many peak Houtian realm and even a Xiantian Realm Thunder Lizards that were guarding the cave entrance. With just his Bone Forging cultivation, he would be immediately killed once his location was discovered. How did he safely go in and come out unscathed?

In large sects, talents that were at this age had mostly never left the sect. They had lived a devout life while receiving the teachings of their elders. On the other hand, this youth in front of her had not only climbed to the summit of Thundercrash Mountain by himself, he had also ransacked the Thunder Flood Dragon's cave. There was simply no comparing the two of them.

It was no wonder this young boy, who came from a humble mortal background, had already reached this level of cultivation and strength, as well as comprehended a martial intent at only 15 years of age!

Realizing this, the woman in red no longer looked at Lin Ming as if he were some trivial junior. She had a feeling in her heart that so long as this young man didn't fall from the sky, sooner or later he would step into the Xiantian realm, Revolving Dan realm, or an even higher level!

The woman in red let loose a long breath and then spoke to Lin Ming, "If you help me remove the Thunder Soul then I will help you seal it. With the Magnetic Birth Stone, even if you cannot absorb the Thunder Soul, you can still take it away."

"Okay." Lin Ming believed that with the woman in red's identity and proud nature, there was no way that she would lie to him.

"Let's begin."

Lin Ming and the woman in red sat down cross-legged, facing

each other.

“First, absorb the power of the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder like you did yesterday to weaken it. This time I will lend you a hand. Take this Divine Spiritual Pill; it will increase the force of your true essence for a brief period of time.” The woman in red took out some white pills from her spatial ring. She handed one to Lin Ming and ate one herself. These pills were most effective when used by Body Transformation and Houtian realm martial artists; its effects for a Xiantian realm martial artist weren’t very obvious.

Lin Ming didn’t suspect anything, and immediately swallowed the pill. The pill entered his Dantian and turned into a flow of heat the spread through all his limbs. He immediately felt the true essence within his body surge forth, filled with energy!

The filling sensation caused Lin Ming to feel as if his blood was close to overflowing; it was as if he had a sudden breakthrough to another realm.

‘This feeling is fantastic. Even my meridians were opened; it’s as if I had reached the Pulse Condensation period.’

Well, let’s hurry up. The effects of the Divine Spiritual Pill only last half an hour. After that, you will be fatigued, but that is just a normal phenomenon. Let’s begin.”

“Begin?”

As Lin Ming heard the woman in red, he suddenly realized that a very, very serious issue had sprung up. If he wanted to absorb the power of thunder within the woman in red, then he would have to make physical bodily contact with her. As luck would have it, the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was positioned within her heart, which was also the spot over her left chest.....

Lin Ming couldn't help but glance at the woman in red's left breast. He saw the thin red silk clothing, and the full, round shape of the beautiful woman's peak. Seeing such a perfectly enchanting curve, Lin Ming's heartbeat began to quicken.

“Um...that....I....”

The woman in red noticed where Lin Ming was looking at. Realizing that Lin Ming would have to touch her in order absorb the power of thunder, her body began to quiver. The left chest was the spot above the heart; if one put their ears over it, they could clearly hear the heartbeat. As for the back, it was difficult to hear from there.

Thinking that the young boy had to touch her own chest, the woman in red's beautiful face blushed crimson. She whispered, “Do you have to...physically touch....?”

Lin Ming nodded with a bit of a guilty conscience. “If I want to absorb the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, that is the best spot. The back of the body isn't so good.....”

## Chapter 214 – Life’s Most Unforgettable Experience

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After listening to Lin Ming, the woman in red closed her eyes as if accepting her inevitable fate. Although she still looked incomparably tranquil, her slender eyelashes were actually gently trembling, as if reflecting the innermost turmoil and tension within her mind.

However, after waiting for a good while, the touch that made her feel so intensely nervous and fearful still hadn’t come. The lady in red opened her eyes in puzzlement, and was surprised to see that Lin Ming’s face was completely flushed red like a tomato, with his hand paused in midair, neither moving forwards or backwards.

The woman in red didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. She asked, “What are you doing?”

“I....” Lin Ming didn’t feel the least bit emboldened to take action. If it were Qin Xingxuan, Wang Yuhan, or even Bai Jingyun on front of him, then even though he would be a bit embarrassed and apologetic, he would never be so skittish. Instead, this woman currently in front of him was simply far too formidable. It was simply like a beggar that was given a single opportunity to violate and touch a pure jade princess; that tension would still be far less than this.

What Lin Ming feared the most was that after he touched her, she would have a secret desire to kill him in order to vent her anger. If this happened, then his death would truly be unjustified.

“I want to make everything....clear first....if I place my hand on you and I still can’t take out the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, then....”

“I won’t take out my anger on you.”

“Then you....do not kill me afterwards....”

Listening to Lin Ming, the woman in red’s eyes twitched. She snappily retorted, “Why are you so wordy, do you actually want me to make an oath upon my heart of martial arts?”

“Well....there’s no need.” Lin Ming took a deep breath, and slowly placed his hand on the woman in red’s chest. At this moment, his entire palm was covered in sweat.

The moment her chest was touched, the woman in red shuddered. Because of Lin Ming’s nervousness and achingly hot palm, there was an extremely unusual sensation on her chest.

“Good...then, I’ll begin.” Lin Ming gulped a mouthful of saliva. He didn’t dare move his hand, but that soft and supple feeling was simply ecstasy; it was just like a flood that washed through his body, overwhelming him with emotions and causing his mouth to go dry. This was not just because it was his first time coming into such contact with a woman, but also because her identity had brought forth extreme anxiousness and excitement.

Lin Ming's heart of martial arts was very pure and strong. But as soon as it touched upon lust and desire, his talent was nothing extraordinary.

A thick true essence revolved, steadily streaming into the woman in red's body as he began to absorb the power of thunder. At the same time, the woman in red also revolved her true essence and encircled the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder.

As the two of them began their tandem attacks, the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder moved in immediate alarm. It began to violently churn, impacting everywhere. For a time, the woman in red's flame cage began to show cracks throughout.

In the next moment, a massive coercive force came crashing down. The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was enveloped by this suppressive power, and its resistance was suddenly weakened. Shortly after, a powerful suction force appeared, pulling out all of the power of thunder within it!

The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder began to panic. It manically impacted the flame cage like a crazy beast. The brilliant flames that were struck fiercely shook. The woman in red clenched her teeth, her face flushing red. Crystal beads of sweat began to quietly drip from her hair.

Lin Ming also clenched his teeth, mustering all of his strength. Because of his excessive focus, he had completely ignored the charming feeling beneath his hands.

Heretical God Force – Open!

Lin Ming used the final card in his hand. The Heretical God Seed began to fiercely tremble, and suddenly a massive towing force flooded into the woman in red's body like a rushing tide!

After the Heretical God Force had been activated, the pressure on the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder experienced an immediate massive increase!

The Heretical God Seed suppressed the Thunder Soul, and the True Dragon bloodline suppressed the soul of the Thunder Flood Dragon!

Under this dual suppression, a deep and abiding fear began to creep out from the depths of the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder's soul. It snarled as its body grew by several times. The arcs of lightning around it became more violent, issuing forth explosive sounds.

“Roar!” The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder opened its jaws to desperately bite itself free from the flame cage.

Kacha!

The flame cage was finally cut open.

Meanwhile, a substantial essence of thunder escaped from the broken flame cage. As soon as it touched blood, the blood was



turned to ashes!

The woman in red trembled, a strange red appearing on her face. Obviously, she had suffered an internal injury. She said, “Don’t hurry to deal with the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. Absorb its power of thunder and weaken it!”

Lin Ming clenched his teeth and nodded, following the directions of the woman in red. Without even realizing it, his right hand had tightly clamped down. The woman in red only felt that her left breast was being completely grasped within Lin Ming’s scalding hot palm. This feeling made her feel anxious and a bit ashamed, but at such a juncture, she chose to completely ignore this.

The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder began to rampage in a wild rage; the power of thunder unceasingly emitted from its body.

Although a Thunder Soul wouldn’t die out, it still needed to be supplemented by heaven and earth origin energy. Otherwise, it would weaken. If it lost too much power of thunder, it would also lose its strength, thus allowing it to be suppressed.

Compared to the fire true essence that the woman in red issued forth, this strong coercive pressure, that is sucking out its power, was the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder’s greatest threat. Yet, it was unable to resist this force.

As the power of thunder was dragged out, the entire cave began to shine as crackling arcs of lightning and electricity sizzled the air. The heaven and earth origin energy in the surrounding space had

also been stirred up. It gathered around Lin Ming and the woman in red, constantly swirling around him, until it formed a rainbow vortex that swallowed them within.

“I’m at my limit....” Lin Ming said as he grit his teeth, his entire face dripping with sweat.

The woman in red flicked her finger, and a deep crimson pill flew into Lin Ming’s mouth. As the pill dissolved within Lin Ming’s body, it transformed into a flow of heat that spread through all of his meridians. Lin Ming felt his nearly depleted true essence reserves come back to life.

“This is a Bloodstone Pill refined from Bloodstone Milk; it is able to instantly recover true essence. When you are about to reach the limit of your true essence, quickly tell me,” The woman in red instructed. Still, she was surprised by Lin Ming’s endurance so far; this was equal to that of a Xiantian realm powerhouse, yet Lin Ming was only a mere Bone Forging martial artist. The fact that he could persist for almost an incense stick of time before he reached his limit...this was simply too impressive.

However, even though the problem of sustaining his true essence reserve had been resolved, Lin Ming encountered another obstacle. Because he was constantly absorbing the power of thunder from the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, Lin Ming had accumulated a massive amount of thunder energy within his body. Despite having the Heretical God Seed compressing it, there wasn’t enough time; it was to the extent that his meridians were on the verge of exploding.

“Use the Magnetic Birth Stone!” The woman in red said.

“Mm!” Lin Ming clenched his teeth and pulled out the Magnetic Birth Stone. He reversed his true essence, sending the compressed stream of thunder power flowing into the Magnetic Birth Stone. The power of thunder disappeared inside as if it were a drop in an ocean, never to be found again.

In this world, everything had a counter. The Magnetic Birth Stone was truly the most splendid and perfect vessel for the power of thunder. Moreover, because it had been born together with the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, there was no risk of resistance.

Time passed slowly. A quarter of an hour, half an hour, one hour. In that time, Lin Ming had eaten up 10 Bloodstone Pills, and all of his clothes were drenched in sweat.

The woman in red was also in a similar situation. Because her sweat had soaked into her clothes, her clothes had directly pasted onto her body, outlining and accentuating her mesmerizing curves.

The Magnetic Birth Stone absorbed the power of thunder, and Lin Ming’s true essence was constantly restored by the Bloodstone Pills. Under this battle of attrition, the purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder became increasingly smaller. It’s purple body became less and less. It gradually became unable to withstand the coercive suction power of the Heretical God Seed!

“Now’s the chance!”

In that moment, Lin Ming’s eyes flashed, and a deep bass roar resonated from him. But, this deep roar did not come from his throat, but emerged from the vibration of his entire body. It was just like the resounding cry of a dragon!

After this roar, not only was the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder struck with awe, but even the woman in red’s heart experienced an earthquake. In absolute disbelief, she sent an incredulous look towards Lin Ming. In that brief moment, she had clearly felt a deep fear that emanated from the depths of her bloodline. It had to be known that in her body flowed the blood of the proud Vermillion Bird!

How could this be?

But now she had no time to reflect on the reasons; this was the critical moment in healing her wound. Lin Ming tightly clenched his teeth, and true essence erupted from his entire body. The suction force was pushed to the extreme!

Chi chi chi!

With a blinding flash of electric light, the Purple Flood Dragon was abruptly pulled out from the woman in red’s body! Half of the Flood Dragon was now exposed to the outside.

“Hah!”

As it appeared, a savage and violent fiery thunder scattered everywhere. It ignited the woman in red's clothes, and even Lin Ming's sleeves began to burn.

The thunder fire's temperature was too high; any clothes it touched was instantly turned to ashes. Even Lin Ming's right hand which was protected by true essence was burned!

True essence swirled in the air, forming a tornado with the heaven and earth origin energy. In that vortex, all clothes were turned to ashes and blown away, leaving the two people inside suddenly stark naked.

The woman in red's face instantly turned crimson.

Although her left breast had been grabbed by Lin Ming, at least there had still been clothes separating them. Now, even the last leaf was pulled away. Her beautiful breast that had never been touched before was actually solidly gripped by a boy. But, this was the most critical time. She could not stop, otherwise all her efforts would have been for naught!

"Hurry! Faster!" The woman in red had never received such humiliation before. Most of the time, one's temperament was maintained by one's clothing. When a woman became naked, no matter how elegant she was, she would lose all her calm and composure, exposing her most vulnerable and helpless side.

When had Lin Ming seen such a glorious spring scene before? He

only saw a beautifully ripe white image in front of him, the heaving of an extremely attractive curved body, and two suffocatingly bright red circles. All in all, he began to pant as his mouth became dry. However, in this moment of blissful surprise, the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder which he had pulled out with so much effort, had almost slipped back in.

“What are you doing!?!?” The woman in red screamed. She had always maintained a graceful and regal temperament, yet, now that she had been reduced to such a state, this young boy had actually been distracted and the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder had almost drawn back in. If all her efforts were wasted because of this, then she really might have been driven crazy!

“S-sorry!!!” Lin Ming incoherently stammered. He hurriedly ate a Bloodstone Pill again. This time, he dared not think of anything else, investing his full concentration into extracting the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder.

But this Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was incomparably tenacious. As it saw that half of its body had been pulled out and the other half was about to be, it waged a mighty struggle against Lin Ming.

There was no way that Lin Ming was able to let go; he kept grasping on to the woman in red’s breast.

Seeing the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder pulled back and forth, the woman in red was anxious to the point of tears. At this time, the turmoil that passed within her innermost feelings in these few seconds could take years to describe.

This was absolutely her life's most unforgettable experience.

# Chapter 215 – Absorbing The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder

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Although the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was tenacious and vigorous, the heaven and earth origin energy it supplemented itself with was limited. How could it compare with Lin Ming who was popping pills like candy and also using the Magnetic Birth Stone?

After a quarter hour of this back and forth battle, the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder's strength was finally exhausted. It was grasped by Lin Ming and stuffed into the Magnetic Birth Stone!

Chi chi chi!

The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder unwillingly submerged into the Magnetic Birth Stone. Thus, a small Purple Flood Dragon was seen swimming inside the beating heart stone.

The woman in red grabbed the Magnetic Birth Stone and her hands flew in a series of seals. With a move, a series of dazzling white runes fell onto the Magnetic Birth Stone, completely sealing it up. With that, there was no way for the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder to escape.

After the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was sealed, the woman in red decided to vent her anger and frustration. She laid layer upon layer of a heaven and earth origin energy isolating seal onto the stone. After this seal was placed, the Purple Flood Dragon



Divine Thunder would be unable to absorb heaven and earth origin energy.

Clearly, the woman in red had a mortal hatred towards the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. Not only did it cause her so much trouble and suffering, but it also caused her pure body to be seen by a little teenage boy with nothing left hidden. Even her chest had been grabbed!

Lin Ming was secretly left horrified and flummoxed as he watched from the side. This woman was not someone to be trifled with. Even though she looked like the epitome of grace and elegance on the surface, if she were annoyed, whoever did so would really eat some bitter fruit.

Thinking this, he immediately turned around as to avoid provoking her wrath.

Behind him, there was the rustling sound of clothes. The woman in red also had spare clothes inside her spatial ring to switch into.

“Alright!”

The woman spoke with an explicitly icy tone. Lin Ming turned around and happened to see the woman in red’s hands behind her head, clearing out her hair. Her long locks fell down around her neckline, and her beautiful ink-black hair cascaded down her back like a pitch black waterfall. Although the woman in red had spoken in such an icy tone, her beautiful visage was still slightly blushing, it formed quite a beautiful picture.

Lin Ming was temporarily stunned silly. The beauty of the woman in red combined with her calm dignity and holy and inviolable character, really caused anyone looking to experience a moment where they lost their breath.

‘In the past I’ve read novels in which it described beauties whose smiles could force men into submission. I had thought that these claims of such ridiculous beauties were nothing but exaggerations, but now seeing this woman in red, I somewhat understand. This beauty is so terrifying that I’m afraid the emperors of the mortal world would sacrifice their kingdom for it. This is what they would call ‘Love not one’s country, but love beauties.’’

Thinking this, Lin Ming began to revolve the ‘True Primal Chaos Formula’ as he rapidly suppressed these thoughts and feelings within his heart, returning his mind to a tranquil and calm state of clarity.

“In accordance to what I said before, if you helped me extract the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, then I would help you absorb it,” The woman in red casually said. She had changed her clothes and recovered her calm, just as if nothing awkward had ever happened.

Lin Ming tactfully didn’t mention what had happened a moment ago. He said, “Thank you, Senior.”

Ever since coming into contact with the woman in red, Lin Ming had respectfully referred to her as Senior. Before, the woman in

red didn't think much of this, but now hearing this title, she thought that it was very grating on her nerves.

After such a shameful and embarrassing moment had passed, he still actually called her Senior. Didn't this mean that her pure body was touched by a mere child?

Her eyes twitched. The woman in red said, "I'm 27 years old."

A woman usually wouldn't ever state their own age, and doing so right now was considered a stupid and silly matter. Still, for some particular reason, the woman in red couldn't help but state her age.

Lin Ming's eyes widened. 2... 27?

This woman in front of him was only 27?

He had thought that even though she looked very young, she was probably 40 or 50 years old. After all, once a martial artist reached the Xiantian realm, their lifespan would increase. A 60 or 70 year old would look like a 20 year old. But, he hadn't thought that she was only 27 years old.

Heavens! For her cultivation to reach the extreme Xiantian realm at only 27 years of age, just what was her martial talent?

Seeing Lin Ming's shocked look, the woman in red finally had a little feeling of accomplishment and triumph. She had been

constantly surprised these past few days, it was about time that this little boy was also surprised.

In fact, even if this woman in red was the same age as Lin Ming, she would still have surpassed him in terms of cultivation. She had a Xiantian fire spirit refined in her body, and she also had the bloodline of the Vermillion Bird. Her martial talent was a superior seventh-grade, ranked among the highest in the world!

She had reached Pulse Condensation at 15, the Houtian realm at 17, the Xiantian realm at 22, and the extreme Xiantian realm at only 26 years. Now, she was already a half-step into the Revolving Dan realm; breaking through was only a matter of time.

Lin Ming had reached the peak Bone Forging stage at 15 years of age. In a fourth or fifth-grade sect, this result could only be considered decent. It was only incomparably surprising when paired with Lin Ming's ordinary mortal background.

Lin Ming gulped. What a monstrous genius! He could be considered a bit experienced. With her talent, she was at the pinnacle in any large sect. Let alone the small Seven Profound Martial House, but she would be above anyone at even the Seven Profound Valleys.

But why had she suddenly blurted out her age? Was it possible that she disliked the title Senior because it implied she was old? With an 11 year disparity, the truth was he could also call her big sister. Of course, this was a name he didn't dare to utter. Then what should he call her?

Lin Ming blinked, clueless, and said, “My name is Lin Ming.”

There was no reason to hide his name, especially in front of a Xiantian master like herself. They were simply two people of two different worlds. If it wasn't for such lucky occurrences happening, then there was no way that their paths would ever have crossed.

The woman in red hesitated, then her bright red lips parted and she said, “Mu Qianyu.”

Mu Qianyu... Lin Ming silently remembered this name. Perhaps one day when his strength grew, they would meet again.

“Miss Mu, I'll have to trouble you to help me absorb the Thunder Soul.”

“Alright. But, I'll warn you once more. Even with the Magnetic Birth Stone, the brutal and savage nature of the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder can only be suppressed to an extent. You will find it very difficult to absorb. If there's any accident, all of the meridians in your body will be shattered. Have you considered this clearly?” Although Mu Qianyu knew that Lin Ming's body was special, she didn't believe that he would be able to withstand the might of the Thunder Soul. This was a terrifying strength that only someone at least at the middle Xiantian realm would be able to bear.

Lin Ming nodded and said, “Yes, I've thought about this already.”

Mu Qianyu let out a light breath. She knew that someone like Lin Ming who had such a firm heart of martial arts would rarely change their decision. Once they decided to do something, they would. They wouldn't often listen to the counsel of others.

“I'll let it be and give him a hand this time. If his meridians are broken, then I'll give him a Black Jade Channel Replenishment Pill and consider this favor returned.”

Thinking this, Mu Qianyu no longer tried to persuade him. As the saying went, the body was easy to train but the meridians were difficult. To a normal martial artist, once their meridians shattered, then their martial arts would also be finished. The Black Jade Channel Replenishment pill was one of the few miracle medicines that could renew and regenerate meridians. It was incomparably precious even within a large sect. Mu Qianyu only had two of the pills on her.

As the two sat in meditation to restore their condition to the peak, Mu Qianyu took hold of the Magnetic Birth Stone and gently held it in her palms, slightly unraveling part of the seal she had placed on it.

Lin Ming took the Magnetic Birth Stone in his hands. Suddenly, true essence erupted from his body, and a formidable power sunk into the Magnetic Birth Stone, acting upon the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder.

In that moment, the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder felt

once more the terrifying fear and horror that came from the depths of its soul.

With such a dreadful power suppressing it again and again, it was only able to use 60 to 70 percent of its strength. The result of this was that it had been abruptly pulled out of Mu Qianyu's body.

Now this nightmare-inducing power appeared once more.

The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was finally angry!

It exploded with a savage roar, killing its way towards Lin Ming!

But at this moment, a massive pure flame true essence dropped in from above, a relentless pressure that pushed down on the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder's body. The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder fiercely trembled, and its purple light dimmed.

This fire true essence naturally came from Mu Qianyu. Now that she was restored to her peak condition, the power that she was able to release was something that this small Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder could not contend with.

"I can only help you in the beginning and weaken some of its power. But once the Purple Flood Dragon Diviner Thunder enters your body, everything else will depend on you. If you cannot persist, than speak up and I will grab it. Do not try to be brave!"

Mu Qianyu spoke as she suppressed the power of the Purple Flood

Dragon Divine Thunder. Although her tone was somewhat cold, it actually revealed a hint of concern.

Lin Ming looked deeply at Mu Qianyu, a strange and unfamiliar emotion surging through his heart like a tide. He nodded and said, "I will."

"Good. Then be careful." Mu Qianyu pushed out the last law formula, and a chain of flames entangled itself around the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, limiting its power to the absolute minimum.

Lin Ming held the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, and pressed it down over his left chest, directly where his heart was.

"Hah!"

The skin of Lin Ming's left chest was burned black.

Mu Qianyu's mind jumped. She hadn't thought that Lin Ming would be so resolute and decisive. Normally, when a martial artist was faced with a life and death matter like this, they would hesitate. But Lin Ming's eyes hadn't even blinked. Where did this self-confidence come from?

"Mm!" Lin Ming gave a stuffy cough and his body trembled, just as if he were struck by a bolt of lightning. Although Mu Qianyu's chains of flame had wrapped around the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, limiting its power, its formidability had gone



beyond his imagination. A savage and cruel power of thunder wildly galloped through his entire body's meridians. Lin Ming felt as if his entire body was being pierced by tens of thousands of steel needles – the pain was absolutely terrible!

Lin Ming clenched his teeth and revolved the 'True Primal Chaos Formula'. However, in front of this Xiantian level power of thunder, his true essence immediately collapsed upon contact!

It hurt too much! Purple thunder flooded Lin Ming's meridians, turning his body into shambles. Lin Ming paled as he trembled, his body twitching. His true essence was just like pure white snow underneath a blazing summer sun, it quickly melted.

As his body shook, Lin Ming couldn't help but almost surrender to this power. He lost his balance, and was about to fall over. But, at this moment, he felt himself falling into a soft, warm, and fragrant bosom. Then a hand touched upon his back, and a temperate true essence soaked into his body, moistening his ruined body.

"Enough. Don't try to be so brave. It will depend on you to absorb the Thunder Soul. What I can do now is give you some breathing space, but I cannot help you in that matter." Mu Qianyu said with some worry as she held up Lin Ming.

"I'm... I'm alright." Lin Ming spoke with some difficulty. It wasn't that he was trying to be brave, but he had a degree of certainty in his success. It was true that the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was absolutely strong. As soon as it had entered his body, it had gone on the offensive, waging a full on stormy

assault, something that his fragile body couldn't withstand.

But the Heretical God Seed was actually able to resist!

In the moment that the Thunder Soul entered into Lin Ming's heart, the Heretical God Seed began its counterattack!

# Chapter 216 – Controlling The Thunder Soul

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Seeing such a powerful Thunder Soul delicacy appear in front of it, the Heretical God Seed began to make excited wuwu sounds.

Woosh!

The Heretical God Seed took the initiative to launch an attack for the first time. It swooped down, like an eagle swooping down towards its prey, towards the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. It charged directly into the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder's body.

The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder began to shake, tumbling around in a frenzy as it roared. But no matter how much the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder struggled, it was unable to throw the Heretical God Seed off.

The power of thunder surged around like a turbulent tide that threatened to drown him. Lin Ming's already severely wounded body once again suffered the baptism of wild and violent energy. But, with the aid of the 'True Primal Chaos Formula' which he had cultivated for a long time to quench his meridians, and the perfectly circulating true essence from when he entered the ethereal martial intent state that moistened his meridians, he was able to get by with no damage to his meridians.

Clenching his teeth, Lin Ming held back the excruciating pain that came from his meridians. He forced the manic and rapid power of thunder into the Magnetic Birth Stone. If he didn't have

the Magnetic Birth Stone, his body might have already exploded by now.

In this war, Lin Ming's advantages lay in the Heretical God Seed, which could hold the power of thunder, and the bloodline suppression of the True Dragon. He also had Mu Qianyu assisting him, as well as the Magnetic Birth Stone. But, the advantage of the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was that it had terrifying power. If it burst out with its full strength, Lin Ming's body would be as fragile as a piece of paper in front of it!

All of Lin Ming's muscles tensed. His clothes had already been burnt by the thunder fire and turned to ashes. The handsome symmetrical muscles of his body were oozing out large beads of sweat.

Mu Qianyu was waiting on the side, carefully watching Lin Ming. Once Lin Ming encountered a life threatening situation, she would immediately make her move. However, what caused her to be incomparably surprised was that Lin Ming was actually persisting through everything. From the beginning, because Lin Ming couldn't withstand the sudden attacks of the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, his meridians had nearly been broken. But now, it was as if he slowly found a way to deal with the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, and the confrontation of energies in his body was beginning to stabilize.

"If he can sustain this state, he really might succeed..." Mu Qianyu took a deep breath. It was the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, an existence that even a Xiantian powerhouse would be able to handle barely. Yet, he was only a little Bone Forging martial

artist. If he actually managed to absorb it, what kind of concept would that be?

“What’s so special about his body?” Mu Qianyu muttered, as a surge of mixed emotions fluctuated through her heart. She remembered when Lin Ming had let out a low roar that had even caused her own bloodline to tremble in fear!

She had the bloodline of a Saint Beast, this wasn’t possible unless Lin Ming had the bloodline of a legendary God Beast.

“Impossible. It’s impossible for there to be a God Beast’s bloodline.” Mu Qianyu muttered as she denied this dreamy speculation. As a Saintess of Divine Phoenix Island, she had some knowledge of God Beasts. Such existences did not exist in the lower realms. Even in the upper realms, there was only a pitiful number of God Beast’s. There were even some species of God Beasts where only a single one of them existed.

However, no matter what she thought, there was something unusual about his body. His body must have undergone some sort of awakening...

“Is it the bloodline of a Flood Dragon?” If that’s the case... ” Mu Qianyu pursed her lips, she was perplexed.

Time passed second by second, minute by minute. Lin Ming was struggling to persist. Although the Heretical God Seed had locked the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder up, the power of thunder still escaped. In order for him to withstand it, his true essence was

gradually being exhausted. Even if he opened the Heretical God Force, the situation wouldn't change.

But at this moment, Lin Ming suddenly felt a cool feeling on his lips, as if something incomparably soft was touching him. He opened his eyes to see that Mu Qianyu had pinched a Bloodstone Pill with her slender fingers and was putting it in his mouth. That icy cold touch was Mu Qianyu's finger's moving along Lin Ming's lips.

The Bloodstone Pill came at too prompt a time. Lin Ming swallowed it, and the Bloodstone Pill turned into a warm power that spread throughout his body, nourishing his meridians that were on their final legs.

In Lin Ming's heart, the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was continuously being compressed, and the Heretical God Seed was becoming brighter and shinier. The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was reduced to an inch in size, when suddenly, there was a long sound, and a scarlet dragon shot out of the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder's body, angrily rushing towards Lin Ming's heart.

“This is... the blood essence left behind in the Thunder Soul by the Thunder Flood Dragon?”

Lin Ming had just reacted, when the Magic Cube suddenly awoke from its slumber. An invisible force locked onto the blood essence, covering it, and dragged it directly into the Magic Cube.

The scarlet Flood Dragon crazily struggled to free itself, but in the face of this implacable force, its struggles were to no avail!

In a flash, the scarlet Flood Dragon was dragged into the Magic Cube, completely vanishing. There wasn't even a single ripple to indicate anything was different.

Lin Ming was stunned. The Thunder Flood Dragon's blood essence, which he had expected to expend a great deal of effort to control, was actually so easily and simply dealt with.

After the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder had lost the support of the Thunder Flood Dragon's bloodline, it immediately calmed, becoming very sluggish. As for the Heretical God Seed, because it had devoured so much power of thunder from the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, it was actually much more active and robust than before.

Lin Ming's mind moved, and he began to try controlling the rampaging violent purple thunder in his meridians. But, the purple thunder was simply too savage and fierce, it wouldn't listen to his directions.

After failing to escape several times in a row, the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was finally and completely engulfed by the Heretical God Seed. Suddenly, the purple thunder instantly calmed down, and began to follow Lin Ming's will, circling its way through his meridians.

He finally controlled the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder!

Lin Ming felt cheerful and ecstatic. At this moment, he discovered that dim purple lines had appeared on the surface of the steel needle Thunder Soul that was quietly suspended in the Heretical God Seed. On closer inspection, these small purple lines of light were actually the purple Flood Dragon, baring its teeth and claws!

This steel needle that was engraved with the Thunder Flood Dragon was the latest evolution of Lin Ming's Thunder Soul!

He did it, he finally did it! After suffering through so much pain, his efforts hadn't been in vain!

Lin Ming's mind suddenly relaxed. He only felt a blinding dizziness in his mind, and then, he lost consciousness.

After an average person relaxed from such a high intensity state and deep psychological stress, they would find it easy to faint. Not to mention Lin Ming had experienced inhuman torture for such a long time. His soul force and true essence consumption had reached the limit; he was far too tired.

Mu Qianyu was sitting beside Lin Ming, and saw him faint. She put out a hand to grab hold of him, slowly laying him down on top of a straw mat.

She silently observed the young boy's quiet and peaceful sleeping expression. She thought back to a day ago when he had been focused on cooking the barbecue and boiling the soup, and she



remembered how he had used the barbecue to con the Vermillion Bird into exchanging a feather. Thinking this, the corners of her lips unconsciously formed into a beautiful smile.

What sort of person was he? There were simply too many mysteries and riddles contained in him.

First, he had climbed to the summit of Thundercrash Mountain by himself. Then, he had broken into the Flood Dragon's cave and stole the Magnetic Birth Stone. With just his trivial Bone Forging cultivation, he had managed to help expel the Thunder Soul that was in her body. Now, he had absorbed a Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder that even Xiantian masters had to be careful of. At such a young age, he could control thunder.

These days, everything he did sound ridiculous and impossible. Even she, who had seen countless talents, geniuses, sages, hermits, and others, could not help but have a very intense curiosity towards Lin Ming.

If she didn't have her own matters to deal with, she thought of quietly following Lin Ming back to his country, and having a good look at his parents and where he grew up.

"Mm? Why would I have such strange thoughts...?" Shaking her head, Mu Qianyu tossed this thought away. She took a red cloak out of her spatial ring and covered Lin Ming with it. Her movements were very light, in fear that she would disturb his rest.

"Now that he's fallen asleep... I want to... explore his body to see

what secrets he has...” Mu Qianyu was startled as this thought suddenly emerged in her heart.

To use soul force to penetrate someone’s body was an extremely uncouth and frivolously naughty behavior. Because soul force could penetrate clothing easily, it was no different than seeing someone naked and exposed.

Of course, if a martial artist was conscious, they could easily use true essence to form a barrier to shield their body and preventing others from peeping at them.

But now, Lin Ming was completely defenseless as he lay down on the straw mat. He had fallen into a deep sleep, and any barriers on his body had been lifted. Also, he was completely unconscious; he wouldn’t know if others were probing him.

“How could I have such a shameful idea? If he knew about this, I won’t have the face to appear in public anymore.”

Mu Qianyu’s gorgeous face blushed. To take advantage of someone being unconscious to snoop through them was absolutely despicable and contemptible behavior. It wasn’t anything that a regal and moderate woman like herself would ever, ever do.

But, an intense curiosity burned within her. It was like an enticing devil that lingered inside her heart; it wouldn’t go away until she did something.

“When he had expelled the Thunder Soul, he also investigated me with his soul force. This can be considered returning the favor...” Mu Qianyu muttered as she grasped at a reason to console herself.

Finally, she could not resist the temptation. As she blushed, she extended her soul force into Lin Ming’s body.

Lin Ming had no guard up. Mu Qianyu first investigated Lin Ming’s heart. Except for the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder’s Thunder Soul, she didn’t notice anything strange except a strange mark on Lin Ming’s heart. But, this mark didn’t seem too special or different. After a fruitless probe, she continued forth.

She probed his viscera, and almost didn’t find anything too strange. As she considered whether or not to continue her search, at this moment, Lin Ming’s finger suddenly moved.

Mu Qianyu jumped up, startled. She quickly withdrew her soul force, and respectfully sat down.

“He woke up so fast?”

Mu Qianyu found that it was only Lin Ming’s finger that had moved. He hadn’t really woken up. She let out a breath of relief, and no longer dared to examine his body.

As she quietly waited, a day passed.

When Lin Ming woke up, it was dark.

Opening his eyes, he saw Mu Qianyu stirring up a fire. She was heating the leftover soup up from last night.

“You’re awake.”

Mu Qianyu smiled.

“Mm. How long have I been sleeping?” Lin Ming sat up. He examined his body, and he was suddenly filled with surprise. His meridians had been opened up, and they were completely connected!

The purple thunder that had flooded Lin Ming’s meridians and almost destroyed his body, had unexpectedly opened his meridians up.

The sign that a martial artist had stepped into the Pulse Condensation period was when their meridians were opened! But, to open up one’s meridians and connect them was an extremely difficult task. It was the bottleneck of the Bone Forging stage to the Pulse Condensation period. Because of this bottleneck, there were many martial artists that were trapped beneath for their entire lives!

But to Lin Ming, this bottleneck didn’t exist. As long as he poured enough true essence into his meridians, he could immediately

break into the Pulse Condensation period.

Mu Qianyu also discovered the change in Lin Ming's body.  
“You've broken through to the Pulse Condensation period?”

# Chapter 217 – Power Of The Purple Flood

## Dragon Divine Thunder

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Mu Qianyu was astonished beyond belief. The bottleneck between Bone Forging and Pulse Condensation was neither too great nor too insignificant. For a genius with great talent, the bottleneck wasn't considered much. Despite this, it was normal for them to take several months to even half a year to overcome it.

These month long gaps couldn't be underestimated. In a month, Lin Ming would become 16 years old.

There was a very big difference between breaking through to the Pulse Condensation period at 15, and breaking through to the Pulse Condensation period at 16.

Mu Qianyu had reached the Pulse Condensation period at 15 years of age. In Divine Phoenix Island, this was considered a first-class achievement. But now, she had actually tied with Lin Ming!

Thinking of Lin Ming's ordinary mortal identity, Mu Qianyu felt a shiver crawl up her spine; what sort of monstrous genius was this? Compared to him, even the growth rate of her cultivation, which she was so arrogantly proud of, was eclipsed!

Needless to say, Lin Ming was also incomparably excited. Not too long ago, becoming a Pulse Condensation martial artist had only been a faraway dream. However, unbelievably, he had reached his goal of becoming a Pulse Condensation martial artist so quickly!

Lin Ming was thinking of revolving his true essence and officially breaking through to the Pulse Condensation period. But, at this moment, Mu Qianyu advised, “Lin Ming, the reason your meridians opened and connected was because of the power of thunder from the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, not due to your own accumulation of true essence; it could be considered a fortunate accident. If you use this as a stepping stone to breakthrough to the Pulse Condensation period, then it will cause your foundation to be unstable. My advice is that you don’t breakthrough to the Pulse Condensation period just yet. Wait for your Bone Forging true essence to gradually accumulate and naturally overflow. Then, it will spontaneously flood your meridians. Doing this will let you achieve the best results.”

Lin Ming paused, before immediately nodding. What Mu Qianyu said was right. When he had entered the Altering Muscle stage and the Bone Forging stage, his true essence had naturally overflowed and thus, he had spontaneously broken through to the next level. Through this way, his foundation would be the most solid and complete. Otherwise, if he were to use shortcuts to quickly improve, then even though his cultivation would experience a short-term increase, his foundation wouldn’t be steady. From then on, the further he cultivated, the more difficult it would become.

Mu Qianyu saw Lin Ming listen to her opinion, free from arrogance and ego, and slightly nodded.

As she fiddled with the fire, Mu Qianyu didn’t know what to say in this situation. The flames rose and whistled, and the firewood crackled under the heat of the flames.

As the soup boiled over the fire, fragrant waves wafted through the cave.

However, even though this soup smelled delicious, Mu Qianyu still lost interest in the yesterday's savory soup. She understood that it was time for the two of them to part ways.

Her wound had healed, and there were still matters that she needed to attend to. This brief, fateful union of chance was about to come to an end.

The atmosphere fell into a silent lull. The night was dark, and within the dim cave there was only the sound of burning fire and the boiling of soup. The Vermillion Bird had fallen asleep in a corner. After Mu Qianyu restored her strength to its peak, she had transferred a massive amount of fire true essence into the Vermillion Bird. The Vermillion Bird's wing was well on its way to a full recovery.

"Do you have any plans?" Mu Qianyu asked, as she saw Lin Min silently watching her.

"I have to return to my country. There's a matter I have to settle."

"You're a disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys?" Mu Qianyu guessed this because the closet sect was the Seven Profound Valleys.



“Yes.” Lin Ming hesitated, and told it as it was.

“Oh.....” The truth was, Mu Qianyu very much wanted to ask Lin Ming if he would be willing to join her Divine Phoenix Island. The words were at the tip of her tongue, but she still hadn’t said anything. To have him betray his sect just because of a casual acquaintance, that was simply overdoing it. Moreover, since this young boy had obtained such results, she presumed that the Seven Profound Valleys had invested a great deal of resources in him.

“That’s right, I’ve been wanting to ask. Why did you want the Flood Dragon’s blood?” Lin Ming suddenly remembered, curious.

“It was to let Little Flame evolve,” Mu Qianyu explained, referring to the Vermillion Bird who quietly slept in the corner. Little Flame was obviously the Vermillion Bird’s name. “Little Flame is my life’s Saint Beast; our minds are connected with each other. I sensed that Little Flame was approaching maturity, and needed a Saint Spirit pill in order to quickly evolve. But, in order to refine a Saint Spirit Pill, I needed the blood of a Saint beast. I wouldn’t have come to Thundercrash Mountain if there had been any other way. Actually, I had already prepared lucrative terms of exchange, and I didn’t think that some blood from the Thunder Flood Dragon would be too big a loss for it. However, the Thunder Flood Dragon wasn’t willing to make the exchange, and we finally came to blows. I didn’t think that the Thunder Flood Dragon would have less than a hundred years of life remaining so it had fought with everything it had, causing me to suffer a major loss.....”

Thinking this, Mu Qianyu ruefully smiled. A Saint Beast had its own pride and arrogance; asking it to sell its blood was truly a grave insult.

“Oh...do you want to stay a few more days to let Little Flame’s wounds recover?” Lin Ming mumbled as he lowered his head, also fiddling with the fire.

In truth, as long as Mu Qianyu sustained the input of true essence into the Vermillion Bird, its wounds would be healed by tomorrow. But, as she was about to say this, a strange and unfamiliar feeling crept into her heart, and she changed her words, “It may take two or three days....”

“Mm. Well, then it’s also good if I wait two or three days; I just happen to want to improve my condition.” Lin Ming brilliantly smiled, and that suppressive and dreary atmosphere seemed to instantly be swept away by a clear breeze. “Wait for me, I’ll go catch a few hares. The leftover deer and soup from yesterday won’t be enough.”

“Mm. Alright.” Mu Qianyu’s mood was also much more relaxed and languid. The Vermillion Bird was sleeping soundly at the side, without knowing the reason it had been sold out by its master. For these next few days, it would continue to endure pain.

However, even if the Vermillion Bird knew why, it would still gladly endure any torture. After one hour, the scrumptious smell of barbecue drifted out, causing the Vermillion Bird to instantly raise its head, sniffing left and right. Its gaze fell on the golden caramel barbecue over the fire; its two eyes began to shine with a

greedy, voracious light.

Any pain, grief, or loss of feathers, all became nothing but drifting clouds in front of this delicious barbecue.

Time passed quickly. Every day Lin Ming would go out out hunt, then head back to cook and make soup. During the morning of the second day, Lin Ming encountered a Golden Flood Dragon Beast in the forest.

The Golden Flood Dragon Beast was a dark gold color, and it was over 20 feet long. Its entire body was draped with scales, impenetrable.

The Flood Dragon was a promiscuous and overly sexual creature. This Golden Flood Dragon Beast was the result of the Flood Dragon mating with a Gold Armored Rhinoceros; it was one of the many descendants that had been produced from such a union.

It's actually a direct descendant of the Thunder Flood Dragon." Seeing this Golden Flood Dragon beast, Lin Ming was slightly surprised. The Thunder Lizards of Thundercrash Mountain were extremely fierce and dangerous, but most of the Thunder Lizards weren't direct descendants of the Flood Dragon. Rather, they were separated by many generations, and the Flood Dragon bloodline within them had naturally faded over time. However, the existence of this Golden Flood Dragon Beast was due to the Thunder Flood Dragon venturing out in the past dozen or so years and mating with the surrounding wildlife. The Flood Dragon bloodline in this Wurm's body was extremely rich, and its strength was equal to a peak Pulse Condensation martial artist.

‘You came at a great time; I just so happen to want to test the power of the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder! This place is near Thundercrash Mountain. Once I leave this area, It would be very difficult to find a top quality vicious beast that is equal to a peak Pulse Condensation martial artist.’

Lin Ming flicked his finger, and a steel needle, with a Purple Flood Dragon coiled around it, immediately jumped to his fingertip, spinning. This was the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder’s Thunder Soul. Although it contained an incomparably violent and savage power of thunder, it couldn’t be seen at a glance as anything too threatening or unusual. The power of thunder was highly compressed inside of the needle; not even a tiny bit leaked out.

If a martial artist didn’t have an acutely pure and strong soul force, then they would have no way of seeing the volatile and dangerous energies that composed the needle. They would only think that it looked like a solid steel needle.

This was the symbol of a high-grade thunder – thunder manifestation.

Energy was the origin of all. Once this energy became extremely compressed, it would manifest into a tangible substance.

The Golden Flood Dragon Beast’s dark amber eyes locked onto Lin Ming, a murderous aura overflowing from it. Its dull perception hadn’t grasped or noticed the danger within the steel

needle, so it didn't place Lin Ming in its eyes. It only regarded Lin Ming as a delicious afternoon lunch.

“Roar!”

The Golden Flood Dragon Beast madly howled as it tore towards Lin Ming, its sharp claws aimed to pierce his throat, wanting to tear this human into shreds.

Lin Ming remained motionless. With a small flick of his finger, the Coiling Dragon steel needle instantly vanished from Lin Ming's fingertip. That small light cut through space at an extraordinary speed without even a shred of sound.

In that split second, light itself seemed to distort as space was split in half by a thin purple line. The Coiling Dragon steel needle sank into the Golden Flood Dragon Beast's mouth and penetrated cleanly through, without even a bit of blood.

The Golden Flood Dragon Beast's body fiercely trembled, its vision blurred, as Lin Ming disappeared from its sight. The Golden Flood Dragon Beast fell to the ground in a vacant daze as it continued to shake. It didn't understand what happened, and that the aching pain it felt was from that instantaneous light that had shot out.

It growled, intending to rush towards Lin Ming again. But at this moment, a purple arc of electricity snaked out from its mouth and its wounds, rampaging all over its body. The manically savage and blazingly hot thunder fire caused the Golden Flood Dragon Beast to

howl in suffering. Its body violently struggled and ultimately was unable to escape the final fate of death. It fell to the ground, burned through and through, as it was turned into a charred husk by the thunder.

Lin Ming let out a cool breath. Although he had prepared himself, the power of the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder had gone beyond the scope of his imagination. A peak Pulse Condensation vicious beast had been killed in a single strike! Of course, much of this had to do with the weak perception of the Golden Flood Dragon Beast. It simply hadn't realized that the Coiling Dragon steel needle contained such a horrifying power.

‘The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder is currently more powerful than my Thunderfire Annihilation. The best part is that it doesn't consume true essence. It's not like Thunderfire Annihilation, where it consumes 30 or 40 percent of my true essence within a single strike. Right now the Heretical God Seed's Flame Essence is simply far weaker than the Thunder Soul. If the difference in power is too great, it would have an adverse detrimental effect on Thunderfire Annihilation's power. I'll have to wait until I obtain the Flame Essence from the Fire Worm Tribe before I can use Thunderfire Annihilation again.’

Thinking this, Lin Ming casually caught a deer and returned to the cave.

Mu Qianyu had some interest in cooking; she took towards barbecuing with gusto. Although Mu Qianyu hadn't yet cooked food before, she had been using her soul force to carefully observe each and every part of the barbecue. By relying on the control of

her soul force, she was able to make sure that the meat was perfectly grilled without a single burn. However, regardless of how she cooked it, she still couldn't reproduce the tasty flavor from when Lin Ming did the roasting.

Lin Ming would hunt, barbecue, and then make delicious soup. He mediated in his spare time, and occasionally talked with Mu Qianyu; chatting about new, strange and funny things. The days passed peacefully, filled with light and warmth.

On the morning of the third day, the Vermillion Bird faced the rising sun, and stretched out its great fiery crimson wings. Lin Ming clearly knew that it was time the two of them parted ways.

“What matter would you like me to help you with?” Mu Qianyu had just washed her face, and she gazed at the rising sun. Her hands covered her eyes, and her voice was softly faint.

Lin Ming was about to shake his head, but then he suddenly remembered something. He said, “I want to kill a man. He is weaker than me, but it still won't be easy killing him. Most of the time he stays in his mansion surrounded by guards. If I decide to make my move, then I will have to do it without being caught and without leaving any evidence. Do you have any means to do so?”

# Chapter 218 – Return To Sky Fortune Kingdom

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“Mm...” Mu Qianyu lowered her head, deep in thought. She finally said, “There’s a way. As long as you enter into an illusionary world, after killing him you can destroy his corpse and erase the clues.”

Mu Qianyu didn’t ask who Lin Ming was planning to kill or the reason why he wanted to kill. To her, those she liked were her friends, and those she hated were her enemies; she did not differentiate between good and evil, right and wrong.

“This is for you...”

Mu Qianyu took out a sparkling and crystal clear purple pearl from her spatial ring. “This is the Dreamland Pearl. After it’s activated, it will form an illusionary world; anyone under the Xiantian realm will not be able to escape. Not only that, but those around will not notice any difference. This can be considered an independent and separate space; it will isolate you and your enemy inside. All information inside will be contained and cut off from the outside world. Not even a sound transmitting talisman will be able to pass through. You will have enough time to kill him and clear out the scene.”

Lin Ming happily received the purple pearl. As he was about to place it in his spatial ring, he thought for a moment and then asked, “Is this Dreamland Pearl expensive?”



Mu Qianyu gaily laughed, the glittering sunlight shining down on her incomparably beautiful face; it was as if fairies of light were dancing upon her. She was simply one of those legendary beauties that were able to cause the downfall of nations and topple empires.

“Consider this my gift to you. But, you must be careful. This Dreamland Pearl will not help you kill anyone – that will depend on yourself.”

Seeing the radiant beauty of Mu Qianyu, Lin Ming lost focus for a moment. He shook his head, letting out a breath as he gathered himself, suppressing the fluttering of his heart. He nodded and said, “Mm. I’m confident in myself.”

“Haha, I don’t believe there is any matter that you cannot grasp within your reach. Even the Thunder Soul that I thought was impossible to absorb was swallowed by you.” Mu Qianyu said as she smiled.

Neither of them mentioned that matter of them parting ways. After the two of them had breakfast, Lin Ming left to go hunting as usual. However, as he left the cave, he had a feeling that when he came back, she would probably have already left...

.....

“It’s time to go Little Flame, aren’t you willing?” Mu Qianyu smiled as she stroked the Vermillion Bird’s head. The Vermillion Bird had a very reluctant expression at the moment.

Mu Qianyu testily said, “You promised. And you’ve already had several pieces of barbecue.”

The Vermillion Bird blinked, its face full of sad grievance. Ever since it had been born, it had lived on Divine Phoenix Island. It ate the rarest flowers and the tenderest bamboo, and drank the fresh dew of a spring morning. These delicacies weren’t polluted by the foul Houtian air and may have appeared good to eat, but after so many years they had eventually become bland and tasteless.

“Well, It’s time to go, we still have many matters to attend to. If you are still so hungry next time, then I’ll bring you out to eat some roasted meat.” Mu Qianyu said. She tapped her toes and gently floated upwards, landing onto the Vermillion Bird’s back.

As the Vermillion Bird left the cave, Mu Qianyu glanced back one more time.

The fire in the cave had already extinguished. The branches had formed together to make a simple shelter, and the pot of soup was still warm. On one side was a neat bed of straw; that was where she had slept for three days.

It was such a simple arrangement, and yet Mu Qianyu felt a hint of warmth. Sunny days, pleasant memories. She looked towards it with nostalgia, reluctant to leave.

Mu Qianyu lightly sighed. She pulled out a pair of small porcelain bottles from her spatial ring and also a jade slip. She used her soul force to write down a message, and then the porcelain bottles and

jade slip seemed to grow wings as they flew into the cave and gently landed on a flat rock inside.

With a strange feeling, as if something were pressing down on her heart, Mu Qianyu patted the Vermillion Bird's head and said, "Let's go, Little Flame."

The Vermillion Bird let out a clear cry, and spread its wings and flew into the sky.

With a whirring sound, the Vermillion Bird flew faster and faster. Mu Qianyu couldn't help but look one more time. In her eyes, the cave had already reduced to the size of a palm, and shortly vanished from her sight.

"Maybe... if fate wills it, we will meet again..."

.....

When Lin Ming was carrying some game back, he saw the empty cave; the familiar crimson beauty had already left, and the Vermillion Bird had flown away, leaving behind several splendid feathers. Next to the feathers were two porcelain bottles and also a jade slip.

Lin Ming sighed, somewhat sad and low in spirits. He wasn't too surprised, he had already guessed that they would part in such a manner. But this time, he felt an inexplicable melancholy in his heart.

He casually tossed aside the game and walked over to sit down on the rocks. He picked up a few of the crimson, fiery feathers, and caressed them for a moment before carefully placing them into his spatial ring. Then, Lin Ming picked up the porcelain bottles and the jade slip.

The porcelain bottles were cool like jade, and there was a light scent to them that was left behind by Mu Qianyu.

He sank his soul force into the jade slip, inside was a short message.

Although it was a bit rude, I thought that leaving without farewells was a better way to part. I want to deeply thank you for helping me expel the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. I've left behind two bottles of pills for you.

I had originally wanted to leave behind some miracle medicines that could directly enhance your cultivation, but after some thinking, I believe it's best if you rely on yourself to cultivate. Slowly accumulating cultivation bit by bit is the most secure and safe method. Therefore I left behind a bottle of Spirit Gathering Pills in order to increase your rate of cultivation. There are altogether 20 of them; you will experience the best effects if you wait until you reach the Pulse Condensation period.

The other bottle contains Divine Spiritual Pills. There are only three of them. For martial artists below the Xiantian realm, they can momentarily enhance one's cultivation so that you can go

beyond the limit of your current combat skill. If you encounter an unexpected danger, take a Divine Spiritual Pill and it can help you safely escape.

I am from Divine Phoenix Island. If destiny wills it, then our paths will cross again someday.

Mu Qianyu.

Lin Ming placed the pills and the jade slip into his spatial ring. He sighed. These past days had been like a fleeting dream. But in the end, he still had to awaken from the dream, no matter how wonderful it was. There were still many matters that he had to attend to.

He wanted to take the eternal flame of the Firm Worm Tribe, but currently the Fire Worm Shaman was too strong. With just his flame avatar, Lin Ming had been chased down and nearly killed. Even though he had the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, he didn't have an absolute assurance that he would be able to defeat him.

And even if he killed the Fire Worm Shaman, absorbing the eternal flame's Flame Essence wouldn't be easy with his current strength. He could only lay this down for the moment and return at some later time.

The most immediate matter was to return to Sky Fortune Kingdom and kill Ouyang Dihua.

If it wasn't for the fact that he had accidentally learnt Thunderfire Annihilation and also obtained a Thunderbolt Devilfire Bead, then Lin Ming would have most likely already been killed by Huo Gong. He had no alternative but to avenge this grudge!

“Ouyang Dihua's cultivation is only at the middle Pulse Condensation period. But his uncle is an Elder of the Seven Profound Valleys, and the cultivation methods he studies are far beyond those of normal martial artists. His total combat strength should at least be equal to a peak Pulse Condensation martial artist. He should be able to fight toe-to-toe with Chi Guda. With this cultivation, it won't be difficult to kill him!

.....

As the plants of the Southern Wilderness began to bloom, Sky Fortune City had already entered into a deep winter.

The cold winds blew down, and gusts of chilling air curled around as if they could drill into a person's bones.

The trees were already bare of leaves, and snow had piled high onto the streets. There were very few pedestrians on the streets, and even the usually ubiquitous peddlers and merchants were nowhere to be seen. A silence had fallen upon the once noisy streets, and there was only the occasional sound of a barking dog. There were new posts on the message boards, the frosted windows tinkled in the cold wind.

In Sky Fortune City, every family had a cozy fire in their house.

Wealthy families sat on heated brick beds, eating delicious hotpot. The poor would boil a pot of ginger soup to warm their family's stomachs. In Sky Fortune Kingdom's capital, even the common people lived in relative prosperity, there were very few who would starve or freeze to death.

In the vast endless snow of Sky Fortune City, in the southwest courtyard of a great mansion, there was a waterside pavilion that was luxuriously decorated to the brim.

During this cold season, the lake should have already frozen over. But at the bottom of the lake there was a small array that was extracting geothermal heat upwards, maintaining a suitable temperature for the lake's waters. There were even several breeds of water lotuses that were planted in the lake. Although they didn't bloom, their leaves were still a vibrant green. In this cold season, such a green was truly a luxurious color.

In the waterside pavilion, there were two expensively dressed high-class men that were sitting down, facing each other.

They wore mink furs, silk-lined jackets, thick moccasins, and there was a golden purple stove heating them. In front of these two was an exquisite sandalwood table lined with meticulously crafted desserts and a jar of vintage wine. Even in this cold season, there were rare litchi grapes on the table.

All of these were a demonstration of the owner's wealth.

Of these two people, one was the current Seven Profound Envoy

of Sky Fortune Kingdom, Ouyang Dihua, and the other was the Head of the Allied Trade Association's Zhang Family, Zhang Guanyu's father, Zhang Fengxian.

After Zhang Guanyu had been crippled, Zhang Fengxian had taken Lin Ming as his enemy.

However, Lin Ming's strength was simply too powerful, and his status was entrenched in the populace. He also had the support of the Seven Profound Martial House and the Crown Prince. Zhang Fengxian knew well that with just his own influence and power, it was simply impossible for him to deal with Lin Ming.

Ouyang gazed at the scenery outside the pavilion as he silently drank a glass of wine. He quietly said, "Has there been any news?"

Zhang Fengxian sighed. He shook his head and said, "The Southern Wilderness is 100,000 miles wide. The terrain within is complex; there are forests, jungles, swamps, mountains, grasslands, and all sorts of ghost-like vicious beasts. There are countless large and small tribes. To look for a single person with just a portrait alone is like looking for a needle in a haystack."

A month and a half ago, Lin Ming and Huo Gong had gone missing in the Southern Wilderness. The two Heavenly Wind Eagles that were with them had also disappeared. After hearing this news, Ouyang Dihua was somewhat perturbed, he began to investigate it. But although he had a high status, the amount of manpower at his disposal was actually very limited; therefore he had used the power of the Allied Trade Association to conduct an investigation in secret.



In Ouyang Dihua's eyes, for Huo Gong who was a half-step into the Houtian realm to kill Lin Ming, it should be guaranteed as long as there wasn't an accident.

When Huo Gong had gone missing, Ouyang Dihua had thought that maybe it was Qin Ziya who had been moving in the shadows. But half a month ago, Qin Ziya had come back, oblivious to the matter of Lin Ming's disappearance.

Seeing that Qin Ziya didn't know anything of what was going on, Ouyang Dihua felt his heart drop into his stomach. He had deduced that Lin Ming had absolutely died. But the question was, where did Huo Gong go?

Did he die in some accident in the Southern Wilderness? Or was it that after killing Lin Ming, he had found some amazing secret on his body and fled with it?

Ouyang Dihua didn't worry about these two possibilities. What he most worried about was that Lin Ming had not died, and was like a venomous serpent that was waiting to ambush him. If that was the case, then he would be in danger. Lin Ming's growth was simply fearful. In a few years, perhaps Lin Ming's strength would exceed his own!

Seeing Ouyang Dihua look so unsettled and unsure, Zhang Fengxian tentatively said, "Mister Ouyang, I've discussed before that maybe if we act on Lin Ming's family then we can force him out. If he doesn't come out, then that proves that he has already

died. What does Mister Ouyang think?”

Zhang Fengxian also wanted to ruin Lin Ming’s family. Otherwise, it would be difficult to resolve the hatred that was in his heart.

But what he didn’t know, was that while he and Ouyang Dihua were talking, a creeping invisible enchantment had already fallen upon them, enveloping them within its grip, and completely isolating them from the outside world...

# Chapter 219 – I'll Let You Struggle In Despair

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“Move against the Lin Family... ” Ouyang Dihua hesitated for a moment as he thought about it. The truth was that he also wanted to use this method to force out Lin Ming, but he worried about Qin Ziya.

Now, because of the Total Faction Assembly Tournament, Qin Ziya had been looking for Lin Ming. Perhaps he might even suspect him now, but he just didn't have any evidence to back his speculations up.

If he moved against the Lin Family now, Qin Ziya would easily be able to discover some clues...

Zhang Fengxian noticed Ouyang Dihua's hesitation, and said, “I know what Mister Ouyang is worried about. Please let my Allied Trade Association act upon this matter. I will use legitimate means in order to suppress the Lin Family's family business. I have already investigated and found that the Lin Family is comprised of a few thousand people in total, with only two estates and several hundred acres of farmable land. The rest rely on the family business in order to maintain daily expenses.”

“If I cut the Lin Family's business off, the Lin Family will fall apart. I think, that for normal commercial competition, Martial House Master Qin Ziya will not say anything. We merely need to wait for the Lin Family to decline, and once Lin Ming's parents are no longer protected, we can secretly capture them. At that time, it won't arouse much suspicion. What does Mister Ouyang think of this?”

this plan?”

Ouyang Dihua nodded. Using legitimate means to suppress the Lin Family was the most reasonable means. Even Qin Ziya could not find any fault with that. The Lin Family did have some amount of influence, but it was nothing compared to the centuries old heritage of the Allied Trade Association.

“Good, then we’ll proceed like so. I want to destroy the Lin Family and decimate everyone in it. I want to see just where that little animal will go to die. If he dares show his face, I will kill him. And if he doesn’t appear, I will let him watch as his family slowly perishes, and his parents becoming beggars on the streets, struggling with the wild dogs for food!

As Ouyang Dihua coldly said these words, his eyes flashed with a sinister light.

Zhang Fengxian smiled and suddenly thought of something. He poured a glass of wine and said to Ouyang Dihua, “Mister Ouyang, don’t worry. I will force the Lin Family step-by-step into a dead end, until they are ruined. I will also force them to sell their daughters to me as slaves. The Lin Family can be regarded as a martial cultivation family; their daughters are always third-grade talents. When the time comes, I would like to honor Mister Ouyang and assist with your cultivation. In doing so, it’s not against the rules, as long as the Lin Family voluntarily sells them. They can be sold as maids, and Mister Ouyang can do as he pleases with them. Who could say you can’t...”

As Zhang Fengxian spoke, he kept attentively poured wine for

Ouyang Dihua. Ouyang Dihua took the wine glass with relish, boldly laughing. “Good! Very Good!! I will have that little animal take a good, hard look as I have all the woman of the Lin Family wait upon my crotch!”

Ouyang Dihua crushed the wine glass in his hand, an immoral and dark grin spread across his face. Once the Lin Family declined, he would use the Lin Family women as his furnace to cultivate in it. “Lin Ming, regardless of whether you died or haven’t died, or even if you are waiting in the shadows for me, I will let you enjoy this great gift!

As Ouyang Dihua was devising a method to deal with the Lin Family, at this moment, he suddenly felt a vast murderous aura penetrating into his bones, chilling him from his head to his toes!

“Who!?” Ouyang Dihua stood up suddenly, true essence rapidly revolving through his entire body. His vision was like a hawk as he swept the surroundings. He didn’t notice anything strange, even his four bodyguards were keeping watch not too far away, as if nothing had happened.

Zhang stood up, puzzled. He thought that Ouyang Dihua was simply being overly nervous. They were in the Headquarters of the Allied Trade Association. In the Headquarters, there was even a Houtian master who was on standby. Anyone that dared to barge in here was simply seeking death.

But as Zhang Fengxian looked up, he was suddenly rendered completely speechless. He was the President of the Allied Trade Association, and he had survived countless scenes and plots and

trickeries. Yet now, his eyes had gone wide, his face an expression of horror.

He helplessly watched as a handsome, smiling boy slowly glided down from the sky, coming to a rest as he tread upon air, floating just above the surface of the lake.

This boy looked at him, a sly smile crossing his face.

“Fl-flight!”

Zhang Fengxian was also a martial artist. Although his cultivation wasn’t high, he still knew what it meant if a martial artist to fly.

Only a Xiantian master could fly!

A Xiantian master came here to kill him? No... no, that was impossible!

Ouyang Dihua’s face sank. He stared at the grandiose youth who was brilliantly shining in the air, transcendent. His heart was in raging turmoil as he was nearly overwhelmed by panic. Not only could this youth fly, but all of the true essence in his body was restrained, so that Ouyang Dihua couldn’t see the level of his cultivation. It was just as if he had reached the legendary realm of returning to his origin! No wonder. Even though he had felt a strange atmosphere as this young boy dropped from the heavens, his vigilance wasn’t even aroused until the deep murderous

intention was exposed. Before he knew it, his enemy had approached him!

“Lin Ming!”

Ouyang Dihua bit out those two words from between his clenched teeth. He withdrew the long sword from his spatial ring. Why was he able to fly? Why was he able to reach the realm of returning to his origin?

Did he step into the Xiantian realm?

That was impossible! Even in the ancient times, not even the saints and sages that founded the Holy Land’s had reached the Xiantian realm at only 15 years old!

Whatever the reason, Ouyang Dihua had a faint feeling that Lin Ming had been holding his trump cards close to himself and keeping his secrets hidden. And today, he had finally exposed his hidden fangs!

In this confrontation, Lin Ming would reveal all the cards in his hands, his strength reaching the peak!

“Who are you?” Ouyang Dihua had lost his former calm. He now realized that he had never thoroughly understood Lin Ming, nor could he ever. Was Huo Gong killed by him? If so, then Lin Ming’s strength had most likely exceeded even his own! Such an existence was usually hidden far away; why would he come to the Seven

Profound Martial House to pose as a student? Just what was his goal?

“Who am I?” Lin Ming was slightly astonished, and then, he immediately laughed. “How rude. A little more than a month and you don’t recognize me anymore? You’re too forgetful. You really do have some ability though. You managed to find someone to disguise themselves as Martial House Master Qin and then, lure me into going to the Southern Wilderness. What a pity, the assassin you sent out was too low quality; I killed him already. Too bad. You almost succeeded.”

As Lin Ming spoke, Ouyang Dihua felt a chill run down his body. Although he had already guessed that Lin Ming had killed Huo Gong, hearing this news from the boy’s own mouth was another matter. Now, he truly felt fear. Currently, Lin Ming most likely had the strength to kill him!

“Lin Ming, this is our first time meeting.” Zhang Fengxian brilliantly smiled as he stared at Lin Ming. He crossed his hands behind his back. He had already calmed down from his panic a moment ago. Since this was Lin Ming, there was no way that he could be a Xiantian master. Although he didn’t know why Ling Ming was able to fly, as long as Lin Ming wasn’t a Xiantian master, then in his own headquarters where he reigned supreme, why would he care that the other party had the courage to actually dare charge in? Even if Lin Ming dared to attack him, he would simply be courting death!

“I’ll tell you now, this here is my Allied Trade Association’s Headquarters. You actually dare charge in here to kill us? Haha! I



thought you knew Mister Ouyang's status! He is the Sky Fortune Kingdom's Seven Profound Envoy, and his uncle is an Elder of the Seven Profound Valleys. Just how many lives do you have? You actually dare to kill us? If you want to run away with your tail between your legs, you might still have the time. You trespass into my Allied Trade Association and dare attack the Seven Profound Envoy? Even if I send someone to kill you, it's not against the rules!

Zhang Fengxian sneered. As he said this, he was already quietly crumbling a sound transmitting talisman between his hands. It was an order for the Allied Trade Association's Houtian master to come immediately. As long as he came, no matter how superhuman Lin Ming's powers were, he would also suffer to the extreme!

Lin Ming saw Zhang Fengxian's little tricks, but he didn't care it. His illusionary world couldn't even be broken by a peak Houtian realm master. That Zhang Fengxian using an inferior sound transmitting talisman to penetrate it was simply a joke.

"Humph, just because your uncle is a Seven Profound Valley's Elder, you think you can do whatever you want without care for any laws? Hehe, if you want to kill me, why can't I kill you? Your name is Zhang Fengxian? As the Allied Trade Association's Head, it truly is like father like son. You father and son pair are simply too rampant for your own good. Before, I had already crippled Zhang Guanyu and turned him into waste. Now, it's probably best if I cripple you too, so that you can accompany him together."

"You're dead!" At the mention of Zhang Guanyu, Zhang Fengxian

was sent into an apoplectic rage, seething with murderous intention. This insult touched upon his greatest wrath. “Don’t think you’re getting away today. I’ll have you stay here and beg for your death!”

“Good. I’m waiting.” Lin Ming said with indifference. Ouyang Dihua’s eyelids jumped. A moment ago, Zhang Fengxian had already crumpled the sound transmitting talisman, and yet, Lin Ming didn’t seem to have any fears. What sort of card did he have in his hand?

Thinking this, Ouyang Dihua’s heart was suddenly filled with a dire sense of foreboding.

“Guard One! Guard Two! Just what are you standing there so stupid for!? Come and kill this assassin!” Ouyang Dihua suddenly turned his head, shouting at the four bodyguards that stood not too far away. These four bodyguards were Ouyang Dihua’s personal bodyguards. One of them had even reached the middle Pulse Condensation period; their strength wasn’t that much different from Ouyang Dihua’s’.

Lin Ming watched as Ouyang Dihua uselessly roared, a smile crossing his face. His hands folded across his chest. He looked calm and collected, just as if he were watching the playacting of a clown.

“Guard One? Guard Two?” Ouyang Dihua found that no matter how much he yelled at the four bodyguards, his voice fell on deaf ears. Standing in the distance, it was as if they hadn’t even hear him shout.

Seeing this strange scene, Ouyang Dihua's heart was filled with an inexplicable chill. He turned towards Lin Ming, his voice trembling, "You... what did you do?"

Lin Ming mockingly said, "Call them? How will you call them? You can shout all you want until even your throat goes numb, but no one will come to save you."

Lin Ming had originally planned to quickly and cleanly kill Ouyang Dihua. But he came just as they were discussing a heinous plan. Luckily, he had come back in time. Otherwise, if that plan was sent into motion, he couldn't imagine what sort of pitiful and sad fate his parents and the women of the Lin Family would have to face.

If such a thing ever happened, killing Ouyang Dihua a hundred times over still wouldn't be enough!

He originally had no enmity with Ouyang Dihua. Yet, Ouyang Dihua had tried to deal with him again and again. He had used all sorts of cheap tricks and vile tactics in order to kill him. He had put him in a deathtrap, almost killing him. And now, he even wanted to move against his family. This grudge wouldn't be resolved with simply killing Ouyang Dihua.

He would galvanize and prod Ouyang Dihua, so that he would struggle in despair, knowing that there was no way he could escape. Only by doing so would he be able to assuage his heart of this hatred and clear his mind.

Seeing this strange scene, Zhang Fengxian also felt some panic as he flustered again. The sound transmitting talisman should have already arrived by now. The Allied Trade Association's Headquarters was only a few miles wide. With a Houtian master's speed, he should be able to arrive in the blink of an eye. And yet, why wasn't there even the slightest movement?

“You... what the hell did you do!?”

## Chapter 220 – Suppression Of Absolute Power

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“I haven’t done anything... other than use a Dreamland Pearl to lay down this illusionary world. It should give me enough time to play with you a bit. Don’t uselessly struggle; it’s pathetic. This enchantment can only be broken by a Xiantian realm master. All perception is isolated within. No matter what goes on in here, whether it be some earth-shaking power or wondrous ability, anyone looking in from the outside will only see a calm scene. If Mister Ouyang does not believe me, then feel free to try breaking the enchantment.”

Lin Ming slowly said as he crossed his arms across his chest. A cold smile flit across his features.

Hearing Lin Ming’s words, Ouyang Dihua’s heart sank. Only a Xiantian master could break through this enchantment? Was it really such a great treasure? Just where did he get this pearl from?

Such a pearl would be incomparably precious even within the Seven Profound Valleys!

Once again, Ouyang Dihua guessed that Lin Ming had an unknown yet fantastical background!

“What do you want?” Ouyang Dihua no longer doubted Lin Ming’s power. If he dared to come here today, then he must have had the absolute assurance to kill him.

“You ask what I want? Mister Ouyang, I can’t believe that you would ask such a silly question. Isn’t it obvious? I’m going to kill you. This illusionary world was laid down in order to avoid the attention of others, so that I can turn your corpse into ashes without a single trace.”

“Good! Very good! I want to see just how you will kill me!” Ouyang Dihua roared, true essence erupting from his body like a geyser. His body shot forwards like an arrow, but what he aimed at was not Lin Ming, but the void of the illusionary world.

“Life Severing Dead Bone Blade!”

Ouyang Dihua’s entire body stirred with true essence. The long sword in his hand turned to a bone white color, and deep chilly wind ran out from it, followed by countless sad cries and mournful wails; it really made one feel a scalp-tingling creepiness!

This move had been used by Zhang Guanyu when he and Lin Ming had dueled each other. This was the most ruthless ability of the ‘Divine Acacia Powers’ first layer. But seeing it now, Zhang Guanyu’s version could not hold a candle to Ouyang Dihua’s’.

“A wise move, unfortunately, useless.” Lin Ming hadn’t even moved. He simply watched as Ouyang Dihua’s sword struck against the edge of the illusionary world.

Zhi—!!!

A blinding white light sprung forth, and Ouyang Dihua's sword emitted an ear-tingling grating sound, as if it were about to break. Ouyang Dihua gave a stuffy cough as his body trembled. The web between his fingers had cracked apart, dripping red with blood.

However, the invisible enchantment was motionless and intact, without even the least bit of damage.

It couldn't be broken! It really couldn't be broken!

Ouyang Dihua's heart sank. Even though he felt as if a mountain had fallen upon him, the illusionary world wasn't affected in the least! Perhaps what Lin Ming said was true, and only a Xiantian master could break apart this illusionary world!

"I already said that only a Xiantian master can break it. Otherwise, it is impossible to forcibly open this enchantment. Ouyang Dihua, accept your fate. Today is the day you die!"

Lin Ming touched his spatial ring, and the nine feet nine inch Heavy Profound Soft Spear appeared in his right hand, gripped horizontally. The silver-white spear edge gleamed a deadly radiance, overflowing with coldness!

Ouyang Dihua turned towards Lin Ming, his eyes glimmering with dark and decisive color. "Lin Ming, don't force me! You think that you can win against me!? If I damage my cultivation to bring forth the Soul Severing Sword, don't think that you will survive!

As Ouyang Dihua said this, his body suddenly shuddered. With a loud shout, all of his silk clothing was completely torn asunder, revealing a purple gold colored flexible armor. This was shockingly a high-grade human-step treasure armor!

As Ouyang Dihua flourished his sword, the blade began to resound with a mournful howls, as if countless grieving spirits were bitterly sealed within the sword.

Lin Ming chuckled and said, “You truly are worthy of being the nephew of a Seven Profound Valley’s Elder. You have a flexible armor protecting you, a long sword as a weapon, both of which are high-grade human-step treasures. Even I covet such treasures. That being the case, then I will kindly accept them.”

“You are reckless!” Ouyang Dihua’s feet pressed against the ground. He tread so hard that even the floor beneath him ruptured as he disappeared into a series of afterimages, his sword piercing straight towards Lin Ming’s throat!

“Fleeting Blade!”

Ouyang Dihua’s sword sliced through space, the air grated with a loud explosive sound. The momentum behind this strike was terrifying!

However, Lin Ming only laughed. Without using any martial skill, he gripped his spear in both hands and smashed down!



After absorbing the power of vitality in the Sorcerer Pagoda, in addition to the cultivation of 'Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians' in his body, the strength behind his spear had reached a mind-boggling degree.

10,000 jins!!

Bang!

Ouyang Dihua felt as if a mountain had fallen onto him. As spear and sword crossed each other, a massive vibrating strength sent Ouyang Dihua flying backwards as he vomited blood. He felt as if his bones were about to fracture!

"Flow like Silk!" Lin Ming thrust out his spear, and 5000 vibrating true essence filaments formed a spiral that pierced towards Ouyang Dihua's right shoulder. If this spear struck, then Ouyang Dihua's right arm would be torn apart!

In this moment of life and death, Ouyang Dihua's eyes flashed with a sinister color. He immediately drew backwards, and at the same time opened his mouth to spit out two beads towards Lin Ming's eyes!

"Thunderbolt Devilfire Bead?"

Lin Ming sneered. The Thunderbolt Devilfire Bead that Zhang Guanyu had was given to him by Ouyang Dihua. Lin Ming had

already guessed that Ouyang Dihua would secretly mix in Thunderbolt Devilfire Beads in his attacks, but he just didn't think that the beads were hidden between his lips.

A Thunderbolt Devilfire Bead was best used in a surprise attack. Once the enemy was prepared for it, the effects would be greatly reduced.

“Concept of wind!”

Lin Ming waved his left hand, and a strong wind surged upwards, blowing away the Thunderbolt Devilfire Beads. At the same time, Lin Ming stepped forwards, his body shooting forth like an arrow as he stabbed his spear towards Ouyang Dihua's belly!

Bang! Bang!

The Thunderbolt Devilfire Bead's exploded in the sky, but they didn't even have the slightest effect on the illusionary world enchantment. At this moment, Lin Ming's long spear had already closed in, and was less than a hundred feet away! With Ouyang Dihua flying backwards in the air, there was no way for him to dodge!

“Lin Ming! I will bet my life against you! Soul Severing Blade!!!” Ouyang Dihua pounded his own chest, spitting out a mouthful of blood. This blood sprayed across the blade of his sword. After absorbing the blood, the originally gleaming silver blade transformed into a strange blood red color. There was a soul piercing scream as a massive red skull struggled out of the sword,

as if it had emerged from a sea of crimson blood!

As soon as the skull appeared, it inflated like a balloon. In a short moment, it had already swelled to over ten feet wide. It faced Lin Ming and let loose a maddening howl. For a time, the entire sky was filled with a bone-freezing wind, as if all nearby human blood and flesh would be drained by this giant skull.

After he released this bloody skull, Ouyang Dihua immediately looked faint and lifeless; he could barely stand on his feet. This was the strongest skill in his repertoire – Soul Severing Sword. Once activated, he would lose 20% of his cultivation. He probably wouldn't recover his vitality even in half a year.

Seeing this massive red skull appear, Lin Ming revealed an expression a surprise. Even though his own blood vitality billowed out into the sky, he still felt a chill from the depths of his soul when faced with this skull; it was as if he were stranded naked within an endless plain of snow in the middle of a great winter storm.

“Die, Lin Ming! Once this Soul Severing Blood Skeleton appears, it will never give up until it has sucked up all the blood essence of its enemies!” Ouyang Dihua hysterically raved. His entire face was a gloomy bright red, as if he had been possessed by a devil.

Seeing this bloody skull roaring towards him, Lin Ming put away the Heavy Profound Soft Spear. He flicked his right hand and a Coiling Dragon steel needle jumped out on his fingertips.

This small steel needle was only two inches long and on it engraved a Purple Flood Dragon. The Flood Dragon wound downwards, encircling the steel needle nine times, no more and no less. Although the Flood Dragon's body was tiny, every subtle texture and detail contained the fierce and supremely tyrannical expression of the savage Flood Dragon; it was so vivid and vibrant that it appeared, not as an engraving, but instead a true Flood Dragon that had been pinned onto the steel needle.

The bloody skull rushed towards Lin Ming from the front, opening its jaws wide in an attempt to swallow Lin Ming whole! Lin Ming didn't move; he simply aimed at the big mouth of the bloody skull and flicked his finger.

Whiz!

The Coiling Dragon steel needle transformed into a tiny purple line as it shot towards the blood skull. On one side was a massive blood-colored skull that was over ten feet wide, while on the other a small two-inch long steel needle. Their disproportionate sizes were simply too contrasting!

Puff!

The Coiling Dragon steel needle pierced straight through the bloody skull. A near infinite purple thunder erupted outwards, as a grid of lightning enveloped the entire blood skull.

The thick arcs of sizzling electricity flashed in the air, as the bloody skull let out piercingly shrill howls of pain. Its body was

like a cube of ice that had molten steel poured upon it, rapidly melting!

The greatest fear of ghosts was the power of thunder. If a ghost wished to ascend and attain a Pure Yang body, then they must pass heavenly tribulation. But under the divine judgement of heavenly tribulation, countless spirits and ghosts had been turned to ashes, completely annihilated forever!

Not only that, the Coiling Dragon steel needle in Lin Ming's hand contained the illustrious Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. While Ouyang Dihua had released a bloody skull, it wasn't some amazingly desolate and evil power. Once the two forces collided, the results could be clearly predicted. In only a few short breaths, the bloody skull let out one final sorrowful wail, and then completely vanished into nothing!

The thick arcs of purple thunder still scintillated in the air. Lin Ming stretched out his hand, and the Coiling Dragon steel needle instantly returned to his palm, floating there as it slowly revolved. It was as if destroying the blood skull was easier than crushing an ant.

As Ouyang Dihua saw this scene, he was instantly stunned silly. Overcome with bewilderment, he had never dreamed that his ultimate move, which had taken 20% of his cultivation to use, had been so easily put out like a little candle by Lin Ming.

How was this possible!?

Ouyang Dihua's heart surged with roiling despair and desperation. His hands trembled. The feeling of approaching doom had never been so close before!

“Did I surprise you? With your background as a nephew of a Seven Profound Valley's Elder, and also being older than me by 7 years, you are actually being toyed with in the palm of my hand. It really must be hard to accept....”

“In any case, you will not escape death today. Can you tell me who was disguised as Martial House Master Qin? In exchange, I will send you off with a sweet farewell.”

Lin Ming didn't know if the one who had posed as Qin Ziya was Ouyang Dihua or someone else, so he could only ask him as a test.

Ouyang Dihua's face twitched. His mouth turned into a scowl as he shouted, “You think I will tell you? Dream on!”

Lin Ming laughed. “Although I really do want to know what other enemies are hiding in the shadows, it doesn't really matter anyhow. First, I will kill you, letting you suffer to death in the most painful and excruciating way possible.”

Lin Ming extracted the Heavy Profound Soft Spear as he said this. The spear point glimmered with electric light as 5000 vibrating true essence filaments were poured into it.

Ouyang Dihua's eyes flashed with a ferocious color. “Since you

won't let me live, then die with me!"

Ouyang Dihua swiped his spatial ring, grabbing a handful of Thunderbolt Devilfire Beads.

"We shall perish together!"

## Chapter 221 – Killing Ouyang Dihua

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Lin Ming's eyes condensed. He rapidly flicked his finger and the Coiling Dragon steel needle shot out with a whistling sound as it flew forwards like a bolt of lightning. The steel needle sliced through space and cut apart Ouyang Dihua's hands with an unbelievable speed!

Puff!

Both Ouyang Dihua's hands were torn to shreds; his wrists were broken in half, spurting blood. With both hands broken, he was sent flying into the sky with his pile of Thunderbolt Devilfire Beads.

“Ah ah ah ah!”

Ouyang Dihua screamed in anguish. Lin Ming coldly snorted and waved his hand. A tornado formed in the air and collected all the Thunderbolt Devilfire Beads.

The swirling wind held the Thunderbolt Devilfire Beads in air; there were at least 20 beads rolling around. As for Ouyang Dihua, he was painfully moaning as he tumbled to the ground.

Both his arms were completely crippled from the elbow down, and his upper arms still flashed with sparks of lightning; they were completely charred black!



Zhang Fengxian felt as the last fires of his hope were died down like fading embers. He was used to wonderful and magnificent scenes, but now, his legs were shaking. Zhang Fengxian had held the position of the Allied Trade Association's President for many years; he didn't even remember how many people he had put to death. But now, when faced with his own mortality, he trembled with abject fear.

Often times, the more high-ranking a person was, the more they feared death. Zhang Fengxian was like this. He had held absolute power within his grasp for decades, and his status was one that was venerated and worshipped. He had enjoyed countless wealth, treasure, and beauties. All of these caused him to have an enormous love for life, and an enormous fear of death.

That youth that was floating in air was simply a devil incarnate. He was too powerful. Powerful to the point where he could easily play with them; everything was in the palm of his hands, just like a game of cat and mouse. In front of him, any and all resistance was meaningless.

Lin Ming released his soul force had swept up all the Thunderbolt Devilfire Beads. He faintly smiled, and kindly accepted all of them.

“I already knew you had Thunderbolt Devilfire Beads. Why would I give you the chance to use them?”

Ouyang Dihua was lying prostrate on the ground like a dead dog. With both his arms broken, he could only prop his head on the ground, blood continuously flowing from his mouth. He viciously said, “You....you wait for my uncle's revenge.....he will make you

beg for death!”

Lin Ming slowly landed in front of Ouyang Dihua. He sneered, “Your uncle? Once I erase all evidence, how will he know I killed you? You, a middle Pulse Condensation master, with four bodyguards protecting you. You’ve been drinking in the Headquarters of the Allied Trade Association too. In this case, you will quietly die and disappear forever. Do you still think that your uncle will even suspect me at all? He might even think that this was done by a Xiantian master! Haha!”

The reason that he dared to kill Ouyang Dihua was because he had calculated that no one would ever suspect him.

“I had recorded at the Martial House Registration Office that I would be going adventuring for two months. Now, it’s only been a month and a half. After I kill you, I will wait another half month before I appear again. Who will even think to suspect me? People know that you and I are hostile to each other, but who would know that our conflict has already escalated to the point of killing the other?”

Lin Ming prodded Ouyang Dihua with his spear point. Ouyang Dihua’s face was covered in blood, at this point, he didn’t even look human anymore. Lin Ming calmly took off Ouyang Dihua’s spatial ring and swept it with his soul force. He cheerfully praised, “You truly are worthy of being a nephew of a Seven Profound Valley Elder, your collection is very rich. Thank you, I just happened to be a bit low on funds at the moment.”

As Li Ming said this, he was waving Ouyang Dihua’s own spatial

ring in front of his face.

Pah!

Ouyang Dihua seethed in rage as his anger reached a tipping point and he suddenly vomited a mouthful of blood. Most of his body's meridians were already broken. This wasn't because he was beaten up, but because he was angered by Lin Ming.

Anger was part of the so called 'spirit'. As long as one's spirit was calm and soothed, and their thoughts enjoyable, their cultivation would be double the result with half the effort. On the other hand, if they became angry enough to the point of suffering psychological damage, then this spirit could even damage their meridians!

The more arrogant a person was, the easier it was to use anger to cause them to lose their minds. In ancient times, there were stories of genius advisers that vomited blood and died from anger. Although Ouyang Dihua was still alive, his meridians had been damaged, and this was because of how much he hated Lin Ming.

Looking at Ouyang Dihua's state, Lin Ming shook his head. It was unlikely that he would get him to say who the one that disguised themselves as Qin Ziya and tried to kill him was. But at this moment, Zhang Fengxian who was hiding in the distance suddenly said, "Young Hero Lin, I know who it was that disguised themselves as Martial House Master Qin to trick you!"

"Mm?" Lin Ming turned around to look at Zhang Fengxian, "You

know who?”

The deep murderous aura that emanated from Lin Ming’s eyes was no different from a sharp knife. As soon as Zhang Fengxian was touched by Lin Ming’s sight, his heart shrank and stepped backwards. He gulped, trembling as he said, “I don’t know, but I can make a very close guess.”

“Tell me.”

“I....I can tell you, but I would like to request Young Hero Lin to let me leave!” Zhang Fengxian plopped down with his knees to the ground as he said this. With his status, even when he saw the Emperor of Sky Fortune Kingdom, all he would need to do was bend a bit in a bow. Now, he was compelled by Ouyang Dihua’s miserable state to kneel down. Even the nephew of a Seven Profound Valley Elder had ended up like this, much less him.

It had to be said when a person was pushed up to the wall, their desire to live was terrible; what sort of things wouldn’t they do? How many people were there that were able to face death without fear? Most people, when facing their impending doom, bet everything they had to fight for even the slimmest chance of survival. At that time, things like dignity, honor, and ethics all became a joke.

“Oh? You think that you have the qualifications to speak to me about conditions?” Lin Ming’s voice suddenly dipped into sub-zero temperatures.

Zhang Fengxian hurriedly shook his head. “I do not dare. As long as Young Hero Lin lets me leave alive, then I can give Young Hero Lin one hundred million gold taels! I will force the entire Allied Trade Association to serve Young Hero! As long as Young Hero desires to search for any rare materials, maids, concubines, precious pills, herbs, anything can be made available through my Allied Trade Association! I dare guarantee that my Allied Trade Association has the broadest information network in Sky Fortune Kingdom, not even the Imperial Family can compare!”

One hundred million gold taels?

Lin Ming’s eyes widened. The entire tax revenue of Sky Fortune Kingdom in a year was 20 or 30 million gold taels. This Allied Trade Association was simply obscenely wealthy.

Zhang Fengxian feared that Lin Ming wouldn’t agree. He continued to say, “Young Hero, if you find me untrustworthy, then you keep me hidden somewhere else. With Young Hero’s talent, breaking through to the Xiantian realm is only a matter of time. As soon as Young Hero reaches the Xiantian realm, then my life will be completely within Young Hero’s grasp; I will absolutely never dare to betray you!”

Although Zhang Fengxian’s conditions were very persuasive, letting him leave was simply too great a danger. Lin Ming didn’t want to take such a needless risk. He said, “Don’t talk to me about these things. First, who do you think had disguised themselves as Martial House Master Qin?”

Zhang Fengxian tentatively asked, “Young Hero won’t kill me?”

Lin Ming confidently said, “I won’t kill you.”

Zhang Fengxian’s eyes narrowed. He wanted to have Lin Ming take an oath on his heart of martial arts, but at this time, Lin Ming gave a cold humph and suddenly turned, hitting Ouyang Dihua’s chest with his palm.

Pulse Cutting Palm!

Pah!

Ouyang Dihua’s briefly shook for a moment, and then all of the true essence in his body dissipated like a deflating rubber ball. In a blink of the eye, he had lost all of his martial arts.

Ouyang Dihua weakly fell to the ground, his eyes losing all focus. At this point, he was no different than a corpse.

Lin Ming retracted his palm and coldly said, “Don’t think that you will be able to commit suicide by abandoning your meridians.”

Zhang Fengxian was gripped with fear as he watched from the side. With just a hand, Lin Ming had crippled all of Ouyang Dihua’s martial arts so that he couldn’t even commit suicide. This Lin Ming was simply a demon.

“Well, have you thought it over yet?”

“I’ll talk....I’ll talk.” Zhang Fengxian no longer dared to mention anything concerning Lin Ming making an oath on his heart of martial arts. He was afraid that it would displace Lin Ming, and he would be placed in a position where he wouldn’t even be able to die if he wanted too. “I suspect that the one who disguised himself as Martial House Master Qin is the Seven Profound Martial House Deputy House Master, Bi Luo. He originates from the Mirage Faction and is the best at illusion techniques. Moreover, he has a very good personal friendship with Ouyang Dihua and dislikes Martial House Master Qin. So, it is likely that he was the one who tricked you.”

As the President of the Allied Trade Association, Zhang Fengxian knew a great deal of information; a normal martial artist wouldn’t know who Bi Luo was.

“Bi Luo? I see, so that’s how it was. What’s his cultivation?”

“Probably....middle Houtian realm.”

“Mm...thank you. Now, give me your spatial ring.”

“O...okay.” Zhang Fengxian trembled as he took off his spatial ring. As he handed the ring over to Lin Ming, he suddenly froze. His eyes opened wide open as he looked into Lin Ming’s eyes.

At this time, Lin Ming’s eyes had already become two swirling black vortexes, slowly spinning. They seemed to contain an endless darkness within them, as if they were but an infinite void.

Zhang Fengxian felt as if his own soul was being sucked out; a myriad of chaotic scenes and images emerged from his mind. He saw countless visions of his life. He saw when he was young, he saw when he was old. He saw when he became all-powerful, and when he became a beggar on the streets.

After experiencing countless manifold lives, these countless lives turned into never-ending fragments. All of this revolved within his mind, setting off a violent storm within the world of his spiritual sea. Zhang Fengxian fiercely trembled, and his spirit was shattered into shards. His eyes dilated as if he had lost all reasoning. He had already become an idiot.

But, Lin Ming didn't stop. He continued to display the Samsara martial intent until Zhang Fengxian's spiritual sea could no longer be broken down any further; there wasn't even a hint of a complete thought left in his mind.

Poh!

Zhang Fengxian fell to the ground, his eyes wide as he stared at the sky. The corners of his eyes were bleeding, and he no longer had any pupils; all that was left over were the whites.

Lin Ming's eyes returned to normal. "If I said that I won't kill you, then I won't kill you. I will let you keep your life. You can lie peacefully in bed for the rest of your days."

He turned to look at Ouyang Dihua. Lin Ming flexed his finger



and the Coiling Dragon steel needle jumped onto his fingertips. “Do you have any last words?”

Ouyang Dihua didn’t hear him. He lay down on the ground, motionless.

“Then die.”

The Coiling Dragon steel needle flew forth and penetrated Ouyang Dihua’s body. Soon, there was nothing left of him but ashes.

Lin Ming waved his hand and a cool breeze blew away all the ashes. He carefully absorbed the remaining power of thunder in the air, and put away the two spatial rings and the Dreamland Pearl.

After the Dreamland Pearl was put away, the illusionary world was still able to maintain itself for a bit. This gave Lin Ming enough time to leave.

Large snowflakes fluttered in the winter sky. Lin Ming had already reached the realm of returning to his true self, so he was able to restrain all of the breath within his body. Only a Xiantian realm master would be able to discover his existence.

He easily left the Allied Trade Association’s Headquarters without raising a single alarm.

“Middle Houtian realm, Seven Profound Martial House Deputy House Master Bi Luo....” Lin Ming sneered. In his heart he had already judged Bi Luo.

His sentence was death.

# Chapter 222 – The Spreading News Of Death

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The snow was falling faster and harder; the bodyguards on watch weren't on high alert.

The temperature was 20 degrees below zero. But this wasn't anything to a Pulse Condensation period martial artist. As long as they revolved their true essence, they could easily dispel the frosty cold. However, the maids were the ones who suffered. They had no cultivation, so after standing in the biting cold wind and snow for a long time, they soon began to tremble.

Even though they were almost frozen, the Allied Trade Association had very strict rules. They could not even rub their hands or stomp their feet for warmth.

At this moment, there were several maids carrying grapes and other sweet snacks as they walked. Their small faces almost iced over, and the plates they carried were covered with snow.

A guard checked the fruit and snacks before nodding and indicating that they could pass and deliver the trays. But, as soon as he waved them past, he suddenly stiffened. He looked with unbelieving eyes at the waterside pavilion not too far away.

The pavilion was empty!

“This... my Lord!?”

“Mm?” Guard Two and Guard Three also looked over, stunned.

“What’s going on!?”

The four bodyguards panicked and used their movement techniques to enter the pavilion. They saw that Ouyang Dihua had already vanished, while Zhang Fengxian was lying prone on the ground, his condition unknown.

The four bodyguards’ hearts were suddenly filled with an inexplicable chill. They had been standing guard here, so how had this happened?

“Mister Ouyang? Has he been kidnapped, or... ”

As Guard One said these words, he trailed off, not wanting to continue. The other three suddenly felt their hearts go cold and sink into their stomach. If Ouyang Dihua died, they would face severe punishment from the Seven Profound Valleys!

Guard One put his hand over Zhang Fengxian’s mouth to see if he was still breathing, and found that he was. As soon as he opened his eyelids to check, Guard One suddenly gasped. His pupils had vanished, leaving nothing but the whites of his eyes!

“Hurry... hurry and report this to the Martial House. Use the long distance information transmission array to inform the Total Faction that Mister Ouyang is in trouble!”

The truth was, the moment that Ouyang Dihua had died, the Seven Profound Valleys had already been informed. Ouyang Dihua was an important figure, so he had a Life Jade Plate.

As soon as he died, no matter how far away he was, the Life Jade Plate would shatter.

The deacon disciple that was guarding the Life Jade Plate Chamber suddenly heard a cracking sound. Stunned, he looked at the sign of the Jade Tablet, and immediately lit a sound transmitting talisman.

At this moment, in a cave dwelling at the Seven Profound Valley's back mountains, a middle-aged man dressed in black was sitting down cross-legged in meditation. His long, thick black and white hair draped down to his waist, and his face was as apathetic as a rock carving. He was circling his true essence to cultivate his martial arts. The faint sound of a weeping ghost spread out from his body, and a chilling energy spread through his body. A layer of ice formed on the ground around him.

This man was Ouyang Dihua's uncle, Ouyang Boyan. He was an Elder of the Seven Profound Valley's Acacia Faction and he was an early Xiantian realm master.

Fu!

A burning flame appeared in front of Ouyang Boyan, and the voice of the Jade Plate Chamber deacon sounded into Ouyang Boyan's mind.

“What!?” Ouyang Boyan’s eyes flew open, a dangerous coldness flashed through them. “Who killed my nephew!?”

In the next moment, Ouyang Boyan was like a ghost as he rushed out of the cave dwelling, and suddenly arrived at the Jade Plate room. The Jade Plate Chamber deacon was already waiting, his hands holding up a tray with Ouyang Dihua’s Life Jade Plate. There was a sharp crack in the Jade Plate, it proved that Ouyang Dihua had already died.

“Since they dare to kill my nephew, no matter who it is, I will make them beg for death! Their entire family will pay with their lives as well!”

Ouyang Boyan’s eyes were overflowing with killing intent. 20 Years ago, Ouyang Boyan hadn’t broken through to the Xiantian realm yet. He was on a mission with Ouyang Dihua’s father when the two of them were ambushed and chased down. The two of them had fought with their lives on the line. Ouyang Dihua’s father had died, but the enemy had suffered a big loss because of him. This was the only reason that Ouyang Boyan was lucky enough to preserve his own life. Therefore, he had always regarded Ouyang Dihua as his own son, and tried to meet all of his needs the best he could. Sometimes, because of his own lasciviousness, Ouyang Dihua would offend a powerful figure in the mortal world. When this happened, Ouyang Boyan would help his nephew resolve the incident.

The Seven Profound Valleys was not a monolithic sect. The seven different factions each managed their own matters. Their

cultivation methods were all different, and as a result, their corresponding personalities were also different. As the saying went, those who walk different paths have to go their separate ways. There wasn't much of a relationship between the seven Great Elders, and not even the Seven Profound Valley's Valley Master could solve this.

Although the Acacia Faction was a subordinate of the Seven Profound Valleys, they were not subject to restrictions. As an Elder of the Acacia Faction, Ouyang Boyan had enormous power and influence. He was able to shelter Ouyang Dihua so that he could do whatever he wanted.

Ouyang Boyan had been protecting his nephew like this all along, but now, he had actually died! This aroused Ouyang Boyan's ultimate wrath. When he passed into the netherworld, where would he have the face to see his big brother?

"Ready the Heavenly Wind Eagle, I will depart for Sky Fortune Kingdom immediately!" Ouyang Boyan coldly issued an order, his heart filled with a firm determination. Even if he had to turn the Sky Fortune Kingdom upside down, he would find the murderer that killed his nephew!

.....

Sky Fortune City, Bai Family —

Sky Fortune City's Bai Family had been court officials for generations. Every generation of the family, they would have

someone who passed the Imperial Examination. They could be described as a scholarly family that had been prominent for centuries.

Most of the Bai Family were scribes, they were responsible for keeping and tracking history and literature, reviewing court documents, and handling the affairs of state.

The Head of the current Bai Family generation was Bai Yuanpei. This generation, the Bai Family had reached the peak of its prosperity. Bai Yuanpei had become the number one scholar of his generation, and he has passed the Imperial Exam to be a second-grade official at the age of 45, and he was a vice-minister.

However, in Sky Fortune Kingdom where martial arts was considered the most prestigious path, the glory of being the number one scholar every three years was less than that of being the number one examination candidate from the Seven Profound Martial House's entrance examination that took place twice a year. Even the Prime Minister's position in the government was inferior to that of the ten Great Generals.

Therefore, the Bai Family's status in Sky Fortune City wasn't considered too outstanding.

However, there had actually been an anomaly that occurred in the generation of Bai Yuanpei's grandchildren, that would be Bai Yuanpei's granddaughter, Bai Jingyun. She had actually been born with an amazing superior fourth-grade talent.



Bai Jingyun's father was a mortal with no talent or cultivation in martial arts. As for her mother, she had only been a superior third-grade martial talent. For Bai Jingyun to be born with such a martial talent, it could be considered a precious miracle.

But, when Bai Jingyun was 15, her princess-like life had suddenly ended.

This was because Ouyang Dihua, who had been travelling, had taken a fancy to Bai Jingyun's exquisite beauty and outstanding talent, and he decided to marry her as a concubine.

The Bai Family had refused. However, Ouyang Dihua had directly approached the Emperor, and the Emperor had then passed down an Imperial Decree. This was an ironclad order, how could Bai Yuanpei refuse? Ouyang Dihua's power and influence was greater than the Emperors. Even if it was the Emperor who desired to receive a minister's daughter as an imperial concubine, the minister would not dare to refuse. Ouyang Dihua's uncle was an Elder of the Seven Profound Valleys. If his uncle wished, he could dethrone the current Emperor and install a new one in his stead.

So Bai Yuanpei had no choice to comply. However, Bai Jingyun's father had strongly opposed this. Who knew how many concubines Ouyang Dihua already had? Marrying his daughter to that bastard was simply like shoving her into a fiery pit!

However, no matter how much opposition there was, Bai Yuanpei could not change his decision.

Bai Jingyun's father was only a frail, weak scholar. His body hadn't been healthy to begin with, and he had been bedridden for years. All of stress happened to catch up with him, and he suddenly passed away.

According to the traditions of Sky Fortune Kingdom, once the father dies, their children had to live in a small hut for 100 days, and then mourn for three years to fulfill their filial obligations. Ouyang Dihua had wanted to marry her, but after receiving this news he could not break custom, so the marriage had been dragged out.

Now, the mourning period of three years was soon over, and Ouyang Dihua had actually come to Sky Fortune City as the current Seven profound Envoy. This caused Bai Jingyun to feel an absolute despair take root in her heart.

Before Ouyang Dihua had become Sky Fortune Kingdom's Seven Profound Envoy, the Bai Family had been unable to resist him when he had proposed marriage. Now, with Ouyang Dihua having occupied the position of Seven Profound Envoy, his status was equal to that of an overlord. Bai Yuanpei was only a small vice-minister, the results of any refusal could be imagined.

Bai Jingyun had used adventuring as an excuse to leave, and had already hidden away for more than a month. Now, she had helplessly come back in order to face her unavoidable destiny.

She hadn't gone to the Martial House for several days. Most of the time, she stayed in her room. This morning, after Bai Jingyun had washed herself, someone knocked on her door.

“Jingyun, may I come in?”

It was Bai Yuanpei’s voice.

Bai Jingyun sighed. For the family’s future, her own grandfather had pushed her into this situation. She didn’t hate or despise him, but she didn’t hold much sentiment for him either.

Especially after her father had died, her attitude towards Bai Yuanpei was even colder.

“Come in.” Bai Jingyun calmly said.

“Jingyun, have you had breakfast yet?” Bai Yuanpei said as he walked in. He tried to smile in order to hide his own guilty conscience.

“I don’t have an appetite.”

“You still have to eat a little. I’ll have the kitchen make a little something and send it in for you.”

“There’s no need. I have to rest for a while” Today, Bai Jingyun really did not want to talk to Bai Yuanpei, because she didn’t want to know why Bai Yuanpei came here for.

“Well... ” Bai Yuanpei awkwardly coughed, “I know about the

matters concerning your marriage... ”

“You don’t need to say anymore, I already understand.” Bai Jingyun’s voice was desolate and bleak. Marriage was just a nice way of putting it. According to the customs of Sky Fortune Kingdom, a man could have several concubines. Generally speaking, only a proper and legitimate wife could be married, a concubine didn’t have that privilege. Even the Emperor’s imperial concubine was not considered married.

Bai Jingyun knew what the reality of the situation was. It was impossible for her grandfather, who was just a little vice-minister, to rebel against the Seven Profound Envoy.

Bai Yuanpei’s words stuck in his throat. He could only hollowly laugh. “That... after another half a month, the Tenth Prince, his highness the Cloud Prince, has decided to hold a banquet at his palace. Mm... this is the invitation... ”

Bai Yuanpei bitterly shook his head as he pulled a gilded invitation card out of his chest pocket.

Bai Jingyun glanced at the card. She could able to guess that at the Cloud Prince’s banquet, he would also have invite Ouyang Dihua. The Tenth Prince had already attained the unofficial support of Ouyang Dihua. As for the Crown Prince, because Lin Ming had left without speaking, his reputation and prestige had experienced a large drop. Those forces that were taking a wait-and-see attitude had already turned towards the Tenth Prince.

“I won’t go!” Bai Jingyun icily said.

“But, Jingyun...”

“I have already said that I will mourn my father for three years! For three years, I will eat vegetables. For three years, I will wear white. For three years, I will not marry! Before then, I do not want to see Ouyang Dihua! If you force me to, I would rather die!”

Bai Jingyun spoke this with an unwaveringly adamant expression. Bai Yuanpei was shocked, Bai Jingyun was too short-sighted. Not only would he lose his granddaughter, but he would also provoke the anger of Ouyang Dihua.

He quickly said, “Jingyun, calm down. You don’t need to go, okay. You don’t need to go. I’ll just report to his highness the Cloud Prince and...”

As Bai Yuanpei spoke, a sound transmitting talisman suddenly lit up in front of him. He froze like a wooden chicken as he heard the message that was transmitted.

Ouyang Dihua... was actually... dead!?

## Chapter 223 – Perpetrated By A Xiantian Master?

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“Ouyang Dihua has died....” Bai Yuanpei mumbled, as if he were unable to believe this himself.

“What!?” Bai Jingyun cried out in surprise. She thought she misunderstood his words.

“Ouyang Dihua was assassinated in the Headquarters of the Allied Trade Association, without even his corpse remaining. The President of the Allied Trade Association, Zhang Fengxian was also turned into an idiot, with his spiritual sea completely demolished. Even a master with a soul searching technique was not able to obtain a single coherent thought from him.....” Bai Yuanpei repeated the words that he had heard from the sound transmitting talisman. Although he was not a martial artist, he still had a very explicit understanding of the strength difference between martial artist’s levels. Ouyang Dihua was a middle Pulse Condensation martial artist, with numerous lifesaving treasures on his body. Even if he met a peak Pulse Condensation martial artist, he would still be able to evenly match up.

But that strong Ouyang Dihua was actually killed within the Headquarters of the Allied Trade Association, where there were countless masters around. What sort of concept was that? Was this act of murder perpetrated by a Xiantian master?

“What about Ouyang Dihua’s bodyguards? Didn’t he have four bodyguards who were always nearby?” Bai Jingyun asked with disbelief.

Bai Yuanpei ruefully smiled and said, “His four bodyguards were only a mere 200 feet away; they hadn’t even noticed when Ouyang Dihua had died. Not only that, but there was also a Houtian master sitting guard at the Allied Trade Association. Yet this murderer was able to enter without arousing anyone’s notice and left without leaving a shred of evidence; not even the Houtian master had noticed anything odd.”

Bai Jingyun was stunned; this was no trivial matter. She was completely frozen still.

There was actually someone who was able to creep under the notice of four master bodyguards and silently kill Ouyang Dihua while also evading the notice of a Houtian master’s perception. What sort of cultivation would it take to do this? What sort of existence had that Ouyang Dihua managed to offend?

Bai Yuanpei said, “This murderer is simply too powerful. The chances are high that it was a Xiantian master; maybe a personal enemy of Ouyang Boyan, who came to take their revenge out on Ouyang Dihua....a conflict of this level has no relation with people like us.”

No relation? How can there be no relation?

The relation was huge!

Bai Jingyun had been surprised, but now she suddenly sneered, “What a great death! He deserved to die early.”

Bai Yuanpei was frightened out of his wits. He quickly made a silencing gesture. “Jingyun, don’t say words like that so rashly. Today, the entire Sky Fortune City will fall into total martial law in order to find the murderer. Ouyang Dihua’s uncle Ouyang Boyan will also arrive from the Seven Profound Valleys within a few days. For this period of time, do not leave home, otherwise you might stir up some trouble.”

“I know that,” Bai Jingyun said.

After seeing Bai Yuanpei out, Bai Jingyun slumped onto the bed. She was in a hazy daze, as if entering a waking dream.

She was free! With the wedding date approaching, Ouyang Dihua had actually died!

She had long cursed Ouyang Dihua, hoping for someone to kill him in revenge, and that he would brutally suffer to death in the street corners. She didn’t ever think that such a day would actually come.

But who was the one that killed him?

A surge of emotions flooded into Bai Jingyun. She wanted to find this person and personally thank them. This mysterious martial artist probably had no intention of saving her, but to Bai Jingyun, his actions today had forever changed her fate.



In fact, at this moment in Sky Fortune City, it wasn't only Bai Jingyun who was secretly celebrating the news of Ouyang Dihua's death. For instance, the Crown Prince, Yang Lin.

In these two months, the Tenth Prince's influence had leapt by leaps and bounds because of Ouyang Dihua's support. On the other hand, because Lin Ming had suddenly disappeared, Yang Lin's power had precipitously crashed. If this continued, then his status as Crown Prince would become extremely precarious.

Life had its twists and turns. Now, in a dramatic turn of events, such a life-changing accident had occurred.

It could also be said that Ouyang Dihua died just in time!

Yang Lin also wanted to extend his gratitude towards this mysterious person.

.....

Because of Ouyang Dihua's death, all the major forces were in a frenzy as they tried to navigate through this turbulent event. Meanwhile, Lin Ming was hiding away in a cave several hundred miles away from Sky Fortune City.

He had two spatial rings in his hands, and also the high-grade human-step treasure weapon and high-grade human-step flexible armor he had taken from Ouyang Dihua's corpse.

Whether it was Ouyang Dihua or Zhang Fengxian, both of them were rich people that simply oozed wealth and gold. Their treasure troves, naturally, were similar.

Lin Ming first took up Zhang Fengxian's spatial ring. He sank his soul force in, and was immediately secretly flabbergasted by what he found within. 'The Allied Trade Association is really impressive. This is the first time that I've seen a high-grade human-step spatial ring. Just the material to make a spatial ring like this takes several hundred thousand gold teals, and it can only be made by at least a Xiantian realm master. Including the cost of labor and the cost of failed attempts, this spatial ring must be at least worth one million gold taels! Not only that, but it's not something that can simply be bought with money; one can't simply hire a Xiantian realm master whenever they want to.'

Lin Ming took the items out of the spatial ring. There were three large chests, a bunch of antiques and paintings, and also some clothes.

After casually glancing at the clothes, Lin Ming determined that they weren't valuable and burnt them to ash. After that, he sifted through the three chests. The lumber used to make these chests was high-grade soul wood. This wood was sturdy like iron, and exuded a faint fragrance. Pound for pound, it was worth even more than gold.

After he opened up the first chest, with a twinkling sound, the air was filled with a bright radiance. This chest was packed to the brim with priceless jewelry.

Even though Lin Ming was used to seeing grand scenes, he still exclaimed in marvel at seeing such a large chest of jewelry that glittered under the sun.

These treasures were valuable even amongst precious jewelry. There were gorgeously thick blood jade, shining emerald stones that drew eyes, exquisite sapphires, and all sorts of other rare and precious jewels. The smallest gems were the size of an egg, and the pearls were top-quality black pearls only found tens of thousands of feet under the sea!

Even though Lin Ming wasn't very familiar with jewels and treasures, he was still able to approximate the value of this chest of jewelry. In this chest, any random jewel was at least several tens of thousands of gold taels. This entire chest was probably worth tens of millions of gold!

'In these treasures there are also antiques and paintings. It seems that they were part of Zhang Fengxian's collection. To someone like Zhang Fengxian, he would never place anything ordinary in his eye.'

Once people reached a certain status, the more money they had, the more they would collect priceless objects. Zhang Fengxian was not an exception. Many of the treasures here were passed down from the previous generations of the Zhang Family Head. There was not a single article here that was trivial. All the treasures of so many generations had been accumulated in this chest, and now, all of them belonged to Lin Ming.

After he put this chest in the spatial ring, Lin Ming turned to the

second chest.

Inside this chest, there was a folded dark-golden article of clothing; it looked somewhat like a robe. On top of the clothes was a large box. Lin Ming opened the box, and found a large pile of gold banknotes inside. A rough count of the banknotes amounted to about 7 or 8 hundred thousand gold taels worth.

There weren't that many gold banknotes. This was most likely because most of Zhang Fengxian's assets were deposited in the Allied Trade Association's banks. The money in this box was only used for emergencies.

Lin Ming put away the gold banknotes and lifted up the dark gold clothing. The piece of clothing was as thin as the wing of a cicada. There didn't seem to be anything special about it; only that it was a bit cold to the touch.

'Is this woven from the silk of a Golden Wood Spiritual Silkworm?'

When Lin Ming had drawn up his very first inscription symbol, he had needed to look for Sky Worm Silk. He had specifically entered the Seven Profound Martial House's Zither Department in order to look up information on this material. Because of this, he had a very good understand of all Sky Worms, and clearly knew what a Golden Wood Spiritual Silkworm was.

Sky Worms were already incredibly scarce creatures. In order to obtain just a small bit of Sky Worm Silk, he had to spend a

tremendous amount of effort. From this alone, it was evident how valuable they were. However a Golden Wood Spiritual Silkworm was different. Only in a thousand Sky Worms would there be a single Golden Wood Spiritual Silkworm. The silk it released was Golden Wood Spiritual Silkworm Silk; an inch of this silk was worth an inch of gold.

Who knew how much Golden Wood Spiritual Silkworm Silk was used to make this article of clothing. If this were converted into gold, it's value was inestimable.

‘This rare clothing may be thin like a cicada’s wing, but it is nearly invulnerable and can also weaken true essence attacks to a certain degree! Why would he not wear clothes made of Golden Wood Spiritual Silkworm Silk if he had it, and instead place it in a chest. Was he also wearing one at the time?’

Thinking this, Lin Ming gloomily sighed. It really was a pity. At the time when he had turned Zhang Fengxian into an idiot, he had only taken his spatial ring; he hadn’t checked what was inside of the clothes he was wearing.

‘This treasured clothing is good, but it’s simply too noticeable. I can’t wear it, otherwise it will be troublesome once they find out. I’ll have to put it away for now.’ Lin Ming turned and the clothes were placed into the spatial ring.

Then, he turned to the last chest.

Inside this chest, were a massive amount of true essence stones

that were neatly stacked on top of each other. Roughly guessing, there were probably over several thousand.

‘There are several thousand true essence stones, and not only that, but they are all pure, high-quality true essence stones. Maybe these true essence stones were a gift that Zhang Fengxian had prepared for a Seven Profound Valley Elder. A pure true essence stone is worth 1000 gold taels. This chest is probably worth several million gold taels. This is just right. I’ve already used up all the true essence stones that I had from before. These true essence stones should last me another year or two.’

As for the antiques and paintings that remained, Lin Ming didn’t fully understand their worth of artistic significance. He placed them back in the spatial ring. Of these three chests, just a conservative estimate of their total value was 20 million gold taels!

He could keep the true essence stones for his own use. As for the rest, he would look for the right opportunity to sell them in exchange for true essence stones or materials and treasure. This was enough for Lin Ming to spend for a while.

After he had ransacked Zhang Fengxian’s spatial ring, Lin Ming took up Ouyang Dihua’s spatial ring and took out the objects inside one at time. Although Ouyang Dihua wasn’t as wealthy as Zhang Fengxian, what he did have was much more useful for a martial artist.

There were around 20 different bottles of pills, great healing medicines, Bloodstone Milk which could rapidly recover true essence, top-quality Soul Gathering Pellets for cultivation

purposes, and so forth.

These pills couldn't be bought with money. Many of them were only found within large sects; they simply wouldn't spread to the markets of common men.

In addition to that, there were also three jade slips with cultivation methods recorded within. One of them was even an exceedingly rare high-grade human-step cultivation method.

Finally, there were also true essence stones and several treasures. Compared to the pills and cultivation method jade slips, these weren't considered much.

The most valuable thing that Ouyang Dihua had left behind was the high-grade human-step flexible armor and the high-grade human-step treasure sword. However, these two items were simply gaudy and easily identified. Lin Ming couldn't use them, nor could he sell them.

After Lin Ming put everything away, he couldn't help but sigh. The quickest way to get rich really was to be a bandit and kill others to take their property. Like this, his total worth had increased tremendously. Of course, this didn't factor in the Dreamland Pearl that was given to him by Mu Qianyu.

He didn't know what the value of the Dreamland Pearl was, but just observing its effect that went against the will of the heavens, Lin Ming knew that it was not an item that could ever be purchased by gold or silver.

“There’s still half a month left. I’ll cultivate here, and then go back to see Martial House Master Qin. When that time comes, no one will ever suspect that I had anything to do with Ouyang Dihua’s death.”



## Chapter 224 – Lin Ming's Return

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Lin Ming's plan proceeded as he thought. After Ouyang Dihua died, Ouyang Boyan arrived, and the entire Sky Fortune City was overturned, every nook and cranny searched. However, everyone already had a preconceived idea that the one who killed Ouyang Dihua was a Xiantian realm master; Lin Ming was never considered as a suspect.

Even Bi Luo, who knew that there was hostility between Lin Ming and Ouyang Dihua, had never suspected him in the least. After all, Bi Luo knew that even if it were himself who had set up countless various illusions, he would never be able to silently kill Ouyang Dihua.

Thus, Ouyang Dihua's death became a lingering mystery. Ouyang Boyan searched day and night, but no matter what he did he wasn't able to find a single clue.

After ten days passed, the Seven Profound Martial House's Total Faction Assembly Tournament had already begun....

.....

Heavy snow had been falling on and off in Sky Fortune City for more these last ten days. The large fluffy snowflakes were just like tufts of cotton, thickly sprinkling down and layering upon the floor.

The entire city was blanketed in endless white. Every morning,

the government laborers would take to the streets and sweep them clear of snow, but the next day, they would have to begin again, perpetually sweeping.

At the Seven Profound Martial House, the Registration Office deacon, Sun Liang, was buckled down as he fixated on reading a novel. Although it was freezing outside, the room was lit brightly with a brass basin fire. Thick cotton curtains hung on the front door, and the windows were pasted with heavy paper. The entire room was comfortable and warm.

Outside was snow and ice, but inside was just like a warm spring evening. This great atmosphere and comfy feeling was the best environment to read in.

But at this moment, the front door suddenly opened, and a cold wind blew inside. Sun Liang's interest was disturbed. He looked up, unhappy, and was immediately shocked by what he saw.

This person who came was Lin Ming!

“Junior-apprentice brother Lin? You came back?” Sun Liang quickly placed down his novel, and greeted him with a smile. Sun Liang knew that everyone had a heart, and liked to be flattered.

“Mm. I just finished my adventuring. It's been almost two months now, so I specifically came to the Registration Office to cancel my record.”

“Junior-apprentice brother Lin is too kind, there was no need to be so polite and especially visit; you could have found someone to pass on a message to me. Junior-apprentice brother Lin came back just in time. You may not know, but the Seven Profound Valley’s Total Faction Assembly Tournament has already begun. These past days, Martial House Master Qin has already begun to select candidates to participate.” As Sun Liang quickly spoke these words, he warmly greeted Lin Ming and graciously poured him a cup of hot tea.

“Mm?” Lin Ming was slightly surprised. As a quasi-core disciple of the Seven Profound Martial House, he naturally knew about the Total Faction Assembly Tournament.

The Seven Profound Valleys set up Seven Profound Martial Houses in the various countries under their control. The first reason was to better control these countries, and the second was to develop talents, and thus increase the overall strength of the Seven Profound Valleys. Every three years, the Total Faction would send out for the most talented Martial House disciples and hold a Martial Meeting.

The Martial Meeting was for all the core disciples of the Martial Houses. Of course, non-core disciples could also participate, as long as they were outstanding talents.

During the Martial Meeting, the core disciples of all the Martial Houses, the talented disciples of the various martial cultivation families, and the geniuses of Seven Profound Valley’s Total Faction would gather to test their mettle in combat.

If they achieved good results, not only would those core disciples be rewarded, but the Martial House Master as well.

The Heaven Opening Pill was an absolute treasure for those peak Houtian realm masters who were trying to attack the Xiantian bottleneck. The materials for the Heaven Opening Pill were difficult to find; the Seven Profound Valleys could only refine a batch every 3 years, and they would only end up with 20 or 30 pills.

Qin Ziya, who had amazing talent and had been with the Seven Profound Martial House for so long, had only obtained one Heaven Opening Pill so far. However, after he took the Heaven Opening Pill, he found that his Zither Heart hadn't yet reached an exquisite state, so he had failed to make the Xiantian breakthrough.

These past years, Qin Ziya had been roaming the valleys and undergoing deep introspection. Because of this, his Zither Heart had reached the large success stage. Now, he urgently needed a Heaven Opening Pill in order to attempt to break through the Xiantian realm bottleneck.

But the Heaven Opening Pill was only awarded to the first place winner of the Martial Meeting!

Taking first place was easier said than done. The Seven Profound Valleys ruled over 36 countries. In addition to these 36 countries, there were also ancient martial cultivation families, as well as the gifted geniuses of the Total Factions.

However, even if one could not obtain first place, as long as they

achieved a good ranking, they would be able to raise their status and gain face; their merits would also be recorded for posterity. Therefore, all the countries' Martial House Masters would also attend this Martial Meeting, as they all attached a great importance to it.

“I didn't think the Total Faction Assembly Tournament would begin so soon....”

Lin Ming was thinking about this, when Sun Liang suddenly cried out in surprise, “Junior-apprentice brother Lin...you...your cultivation has already reached the peak of Bone Forging?”

As soon as Sun Liang discovered Lin Ming's cultivation, his hands trembled and he nearly dropped his teacup. He remembered that the last time Lin Ming had walked in here, he was only at the Altering Muscle stage. Now, after coming back so soon, he had unexpectedly already reached the peak of Bone Forging! This cultivation speed was simply too terrifyingly fast!

Originally, Sun Liang wasn't very optimistic about Lin Ming going out for an adventure. In his opinion, the experiences he could gain from going adventuring could not compare to the resources that the Seven Profound Martial House provided. But, he had never imagined that after Lin Ming came back, his cultivation had actually increased by a realm and a half!

“Mm. I broke through by luck.” Lin Ming was reluctant to speak more about this issue. He knew that in front of Qin Ziya, he would not be able to conceal his cultivation. Also, it was best not to reveal the fact that he had reached the realm of returning to his origin,

otherwise he would find it difficult to explain.

Lucky? How come I don't have this kind of luck?"

Sun Liang listened to Lin Ming casually toss out an answer, and he had a sudden urge to strangle him. From Altering Muscle to Bone Forging, he had passed a realm and half in less than two months. This luck was really abnormal; it really made one irritated.

"That's right, when the Seven Profound Decree was handed down, didn't it state that as long as Junior-apprentice Brother Lin reached the peak of Altering Muscle before 16 years of age, then you will be able to become a core disciple? Won't Junior-apprentice Brother Lin already be regarded as a core disciple right now? Sun Liang remembered the uproar that the Seven Profound Decree had caused, and his two eyes began to shine.

"Mm. I should be."

Sun Liang froze for a moment, not knowing how to respond. Although he knew that it was only a matter of time before Lin Ming became a core disciple, he had actually done so today. To Sun Liang, it felt a bit like being in a dream. Lin Ming was so young and he already achieved such incredible results. Before, he thought it was a bit of an exaggeration when others said Lin Ming would become a Seven Profound Envoy. But now it seemed that this was more than likely!

If he broke through to the Xiantian realm, then he would become

a Seven Profound Valley Elder.

Sun Liang took a deep breath. He didn't dare to imagine any further. His respect towards Lin Ming only increased, and he handed Lin Ming a teacup with both hands stretched. "Junior-apprentice Brother Lin's cultivation speed is beyond amazing. Maybe this time in the Total Faction Martial Meeting, you will be able to enter the top 50."

Sun Liang wasn't underestimating Lin Ming when he mentioned the top 50. The truth was, most of the disciples that participated in the Total Faction Martial Meeting were in their late teens or even 20 years old. Their cultivation levels were almost all at the Pulse Condensation period or above. For the 15 year old Lin Ming, this was just too great a deficit. Facing against martial artists like them, he really suffered a loss.

Moreover, there were simply too many disciples participating in the Total Faction Martial Meeting. The Seven Profound Valleys ruled over 36 countries, and there were also over a dozen ancient martial cultivation families, as well as the most gifted disciples of the Total Factions. Altogether, there were around 5 or 6 hundred people. To stand out within such a crowd of genius talents was not easy.

Lin Ming smiled, not denying anything. He took a sip of hot tea and asked, "You said that Martial House Master Qin had begun selecting people, who has he chosen so far?"

Sun Liang said, "Two days ago, Martial House Master Qin and Martial House Master Sun had already convened all the core

disciples together to battle in a great qualifying competition. The competition is already more than halfway over, and three people have qualified to enter the Martial Meeting. The last two candidate spots will be decided after the competition's results are concluded.

“Oh? Which three people were selected?”

“The three disciples that have been chosen are Qin Xingxuan, Zhou Yu, and Liang Long. The other remaining undecideds are Ling Sen, Ta Ku, Zhao Jifeng, and Jiang Bin.”

“Mm? Ling Sen hasn't been selected in the first group of people?” Lin Ming was somewhat surprised. Although Ling Sen wasn't a core disciple, his strength had already reached that of Pulse Condensation period martial artists. Even Qin Xingxuan wasn't necessarily Ling Sen's match, so how come he wasn't chosen?

Sun Liang said, “Martial House Master Qin first chose from the five core disciples, and then he began to consider Ling Sen, and Ta Ku.”

So that's how it was. Lin Ming finally understood. The Seven Profound Valleys Total Faction Assembly Tournament was focused on the core disciples. Normally non-core disciples wouldn't be allowed to participate. However, these five core disciples probably weren't up to Qin Ziya's standards, so he had pulled in Ling Sen and Ta Ku.

Sun Liang proceeded to say, “Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, since you've come back you should hurry and see Martial House



Mater Qin. He's currently at the Martial House's Profound Martial Palace."

.....

To the Seven Profound Martial House Masters of every country, the Total Faction Martial Meeting that occurred every three years was a very important event. Qin Ziya also took this tournament in complete earnest. He had lent Lin Ming his assistance and helped him so much because he hoped that Lin Ming would be able to shine at the Total Faction Martial Meeting. Of course, now, he didn't hold much hope this time. After all, Lin Ming was too young, and his cultivation was only at the Altering Muscle stage. No matter how great his talent, it was impossible for him to match against those Pulse Condensation period talents that seemed blessed by the will of the heavens.

The age limit for martial artists to participate in the Total Faction Martial Meeting was 22 years old. Since Lin Ming could participate in two more tournaments, Qin Ziya believed that, with Lin Ming's talent, he would definitely be able to shine in all his radiant glory at the latter Martial Meetings.

But, before Qin Ziya had the time to carry out his plan, Lin Ming had gone missing.

Qin Ziya suspected the one behind this was Ouyang Dihua, but he had no proof to back his suspicions. However, he had never imagined that Ouyang Dihua would perish half a month ago. Not only did he meet his maker, he had also been killed in a very strange manner; he had actually died within the Headquarters of

the Allied Trade association, and the several bodyguards close to him hadn't even noticed anything strange.

As soon as Ouyang Dihua passed away, Ouyang Boyan had rushed to Sky Fortune City. Now, the whole Sky Fortune City was a complete mess; there was chaos and disorder everywhere, and Qin Ziya was constantly miserable.

At this critical junction, the Total Faction Assembly Tournament was about to begin. Because Sky Fortune Kingdom was a second-grade country, they were able to send out five participants.

The Seven Profound Martial House had altogether 5 core disciples.

However, Qin Ziya was unsatisfied and discontent with the strength of these 5 core disciples. Of those five, only Qin Xingxuan had shown some promise. But, her age was simply too young. He feared that she wouldn't even reach the top 200.

Therefore, his only option had been to also let Ling Sen and Ta Ku participate. The truth was Qin Ziya did not wish to do this, because if he did, the other countries would laugh at his Sky Fortune Kingdom's Seven Profound Martial House and say that they didn't have anyone decent. They would ridicule the fact that outer disciples had been chosen to participate in the Total Faction Martial Meeting and claim that they did so only to fill in numbers.

Although Qin Ziya had an easy going temperament and was usually indifferent, that didn't mean that he didn't care about

anything. Since he became the Martial House Master, he also shouldered the burden of being a Martial House Master. He didn't wish to see his Martial House being looked down upon by others.

## Chapter 225 – Start Of The Qualifiers

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Qin Ziya sighed, “This time we really are short on personnel. The last time, Mu Yin was able to enter the top 100, but now he has already passed 22 years of age, and was accepted into the Total Faction. Qin Xingxuan is still too young; she won’t achieve good results. From here on we can only rely on Ling Sen to fill the gap....”

“Mm. What a pity. If Lin Ming were here, then his current strength might have even surpassed Ta Ku.” The man who spoke to Qin Ziya wore blue-clothes, his white-hair tied up in a bun. He looked like a priest, and he was one of the two Deputy House Masters of the Seven Profound Martial House, Sun Youdao.

Sun Youdao was 45 years old when he stepped into the Houtian realm. Presently, he had already been stuck at the Houtian realm for 70 years. Although his cultivation had reached the peak of Houtian realm, Sun Youdao knew that with his talent, there was no way the Total Faction would bestow upon him a Heaven Opening Pill. In any case, the truth was that giving a Heaven Opening Pill to him would simply be a waste. A Heaven Opening Pill wouldn’t even be enough for him to reach the Xiantian realm.

Because he had already accepted the reality of his life, Sun Youdao had always maintained an upbeat and good mentality of things. He was proper, safe, and after becoming Deputy House Master, never engaged in any needless battles. He also maintained a good relationship with Qin Ziya.

Qin Ziya nodded and said, “It’s likely, but unfortunately, Lin

Ming is still missing at this time.”

“If he had really gone out adventuring, then I fear that....” Sun Youdao trailed off. He wasn’t really convinced that Lin Ming had gone out adventuring; it simply made no sense. Not to mention all the enemies that he had managed to make, but even if he had no enemies, the experience of being out adventuring in the world wasn’t necessarily that much better than being in the Seven Profound Martial House, where he could have unlimited use of the seven major killing arrays.

Qin Ziya remained silent.

Sun Youdao sighed and said, “Lin Ming was indeed a good seed. If he had continued to grow, then even though he might not achieve outstanding results at this Total Faction Martial Meeting, he definitely would have been able to get good results. He might not be able to reach the top ten, but he could still have his hopeful aspirations!”

Sun Youdao had just finished speaking, when a sound transmitting talisman burst into flames in the room. Qin Ziya heard the message in the sound transmitting talisman, and instantly shot up.

“What’s going on?” Sun Youdao rarely saw Qin Ziya lose his composure.

“The Martial House Registration Office just sent some news; Lin Ming has come back.”

“Mm?” Sun Youdao was shocked. “This boy, did he really go out adventuring?”

Sun Youdao had just voiced this out when Lin Ming called out from outside the Profound Martial Palace: “Disciple Lin Ming seeks an audience with Martial House Master Qin.”

“Come in!”

The doors of the palace were shoved open, and Lin Ming walked forward, bowing. “Martial House Master Qin, Martial House Master Sun.”

This was the blue-clothed old man that Lin Ming had met several months ago; he was the one that had given him the Heavy Profound Soft Spear.

Qin Ziya began giving Lin Ming a once over, examining him from head to toe. His facial expression even changed a few times, eyes widening and blinking, mouth closing and opening. Qin Ziya was usually calm, but this time he was stunned out of his indifferent and tranquil appearance. “Lin Ming, you reached the peak Bone Forging stage!?”

“Yes, a few days ago I encountered a lucky opportunity and made a breakthrough.

Lin Ming said this lightly, but Qin Ziya’s heart was surging with

marvel and wonder. When a martial artist found a fortuitous encounter, it was usually followed by danger. The greater the opportunity, the greater the danger. Just what had Lin Ming experienced in his two months outside? Every martial artist had their own secrets, so Qin Ziya didn't press this issue.

The blue-clothed old man was also stunned, almost to the point of his beard popping up. When Lin Ming was at the Altering Muscle stage, he was able to defeat the Bone Forging stage Zhang Guanyu. Now he was at the Bone Forging stage, a truly terrifying state! He might even reach the top 50 of the Total Faction Assembly Tournament, or if he did well, even the top 30!

Qin Ziya asked, "Lin Ming, did you really go out adventuring these past two months?"

Lin Ming nodded. Naturally, he did not mention the issue of Ouyang Dihua.

Qin Ziya hesitated, and didn't ask again. He always thought that something seemed off about this. Lin Ming had suddenly gone out adventuring, and then there was the death of Ouyang Dihua....if Lin Ming's cultivation weren't so low where it would be impossible to kill Ouyang Dihua, then Qin Ziya might even suspect that he was related to the incident.

"I may have over thought some things." Since Lin Ming had answered, Qin Ziya didn't question him any further. What he wanted to know now was the extent of Lin Ming's strength.

“Lin Ming, according to the Seven Profound Decree, you are now officially a core disciple of my Seven Profound Martial House. Do you know about this Total Faction Martial Meeting?”

Lin Ming nodded in affirmation, “This disciple knows.”

“Good. For this Total Faction Martial Meeting, we are actually short of two people. We originally decided to select from Ling Sen, Ta Ku, Zhao Jifeng, and Jiang Bin. Now, with you, that makes five people from which we can choose two! You rest well tonight. Tomorrow in the morning, the qualifying martial arts contest will begin. This is a good time for you to duel with Ling Sen and Ta Ku, we’ll have you match against those two. If you win, then the Blue Miracle Pill and Body Spiritual Ichor that was promised previously will also be given to you. Incidentally, Ling Sen had also broken through to the Bone Forging stage half a month ago; you should come prepared.”

Although he knew that Lin Ming would definitely take one of the two spots, Qin Ziya still wanted him to participate in the matches. The first reason was to convince the public, and the second reason was because he wanted to know just how strong Lin Ming had become.

“Oh, I know.” Lin Ming knew that this was no accident. Ling Sen had already paused at the peak Altering Muscle stage for a very long time; it was about time that he made a breakthrough.

Lin Ming was looking forward to this match against Ling Sen. Originally Ling Sen was the goal which Lin Ming had been wholeheartedly pursuing with all his passion. But now, that was all in



the past.

.....

When news of Lin Ming’s return spread, it was as if it had grown wings, steadily spreading throughout the entire Sky Fortune City.

Most people didn’t have an inkling about anything untoward that happened. They only thought that Lin Ming had really gone out adventuring. There were only a few influential individuals who felt that this was unusual.

Of course, the most shocked one of all had been Bi Luo; Lin Ming was actually still alive!

“This little beast really has the best luck ever!” Bi Luo’s face sank. Because his lasting impression so far was that Ouyang Dihua had died in the hands of a Xiantian master, he did not suspect Lin Ming at all.

“Would he know that other than Ouyang Dihua trying to kill him, there was also me?” As Bi Luo thought this, he became very uneasy. Lin Ming’s rate of growth was simply too quick. In a few years, he might even be able to threaten him.

Bi Luo had thought of telling Ouyang Boyan of the hostility between Ouyang Dihua and Lin Ming, and how they had tried to murder him, but he feared that Ouyang Boyan would fly into a rage and take out his anger on him. As it was, Bi Luo was placed in a

dilemma, as if he were walking on eggshells.

.....

The Total Faction Martial Meeting's qualifying contest was a grand occasion that occurred every three years at the Seven Profound Martial House. The qualifying contest was open to some of the public. As long as one was an aristocrat, had status, or was a disciple of the Seven Profound Martial House, then they could come to observe.

When the first round of core disciples had been chosen, because of the cold weather, the audience was younger and smaller than it was in the past. But this time was different. Now, the entire field was packed with people. Out of them, 90% had come because they heard Lin Ming had returned, and wanted to watch the decisive showdown between Lin Ming and Ling Sen.

In Sky Fortune Kingdom, the two most well-known individuals of the younger generation were Ling Sen and Lin Ming. As for Zhou Yu and Liang Long, they were core disciples of the Martial House, and not many people knew of them. These two originated from the four great martial cultivation families that lived at the edge of Sky Fortune Kingdom. Because they were not people of Sky Fortune Kingdom, most people didn't care whether they were strong or weak.

Snow was still falling from the sky, but it had greatly lessened from before. The entire Seven Profound Martial House martial stage had been swept clean of snow, and a snow cover was put up to prevent snow from falling around.

Those martial artists with cultivation had no need to fear the cold. But as for those physically weak aristocrats, they wore warm mink silk clothing, drank hot tea on one side and had a burning brazier on the other, so they weren't feeling the chill either.

Liang Long and Zhou Yu, who had passed the qualifying contest early, were also sitting in the audience as they waited for the start of the matches.

"You think Ling Sen will win or will it be Lin Ming?" Liang Long casually mumbled as he ate pine nuts. In his opinion, the main event of the qualifiers was the showdown between Lin Ming and Ling Sen. As for Zhao Jifeng, Jiang Bin, and Ta Ku, they were a bit less exciting.

Zhou Yu laughed and said, "This is hard to say. When Ling Sen was at the peak of Altering Muscle, he was comparable to a Pulse Condensation period martial artist. As for Lin Ming, when he was at the early Altering Muscle stage, he was able to defeat Zhang Guanyu. Now that both their strengths have increased, this will truly be an absolutely savage and fierce struggle between the two."

The news of Lin Ming reaching the peak Bone Forging stage hadn't yet spread. But Zhou Yan had already been informed in advance. Lin Ming was now an official core disciple.

"Jiang Bin and Zhao Jifeng are truly much worse. I'd like to go up on stage and test myself against Lin Ming's ability." Liang Long said with a confident grin. He didn't think his strength was any

worse than that of Ling Sen and Lin Ming.

“Mm? The Martial House Master has arrived.” Liang Long put down his pine nuts. At the entrance of the martial stage, a line of people filed in. The one at the front wearing white was Qin Ziya. As the snowflakes fluttered down, none of them touched his body; they simply flew away before getting too close.

Behind Qin Ziya was Martial House Master Sun, and behind him was Lin Ming, Ling Sen, and the rest of the five participants.

Seeing Lin Ming appear, the atmosphere of the entire field began to suddenly boil over. A few months ago, Lin Ming had managed to create miracles over and over again. His accumulated popularity even surpassed that of Qin Xingxuan. To martial artists with commoner backgrounds, his male fans, and his female Linmaniacs, Lin Ming was their absolute idol. He was their rising sun, dazzlingly splendid.

There were many young aristocrat girls who dropped all sense of modesty and bawdily waved at Lin Ming with their handkerchiefs. Due to Lin Ming reappearing after two months of silence, this caused a feeling of intense and infinite anticipation among all the Linmaniacs, like a roiling storm beneath a calm sea.

As the hour approached, more and more people began to arrive on the viewing grounds. Among them was even Bai Jingyun, who had recently left the confines of her home. This had even caused Murong Zi to be surprised. “Big Sister Jingyun, you finally came out! If you stayed in your room any longer then you might start molding.”

Bai Jingyun smiled and said nothing. She inadvertently glanced at the audience, her eyes stopping on Lin Ming for a moment before moving past him.

Bai Jingyun naturally knew of the feud between Ouyang Dihua and Lin Ming. But, common logic and reasoning told her that Ouyang Dihua's death was committed by a mysterious Xiantian realm master, and had nothing at all to do with Lin Ming. However, she didn't know why, but somehow she had subconsciously associated Lin Ming with her mysterious Xiantian savior.

"Big Sister Jingyun, who are you looking for?" Murong Zi asked on the side with an impish smile.

"Nothing, I'm just looking around." Bai Jingyun shook her head and lightly smiled. But, the truth was, her heart wasn't calm at all.

With a quarter of an hour left until the start of the qualifiers, Crown Prince Yang Lin also appeared. Today, Yang Lin had put on a gown emblazoned with a Kirin. He wore snow boots and straddled a Snow Dragon Horse. He could be described as being in very high-spirits.

When the Crown Prince arrived, there wasn't an announcement. This was because among those present today, there were many important people; too many to count. There were the heads and elders of large and small aristocratic families, the nobility, marquis, counts, and even two of the Ten Great Generals.

With such a scene, his mere status of a Prince wasn't as high-profile.

## Chapter 226 – Lin Ming VS Jiang Bin

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After Yang Lin arrived, he glanced at Lin Ming, nodding at him with a smile before he went to sit down at his own seat. Ever since Ouyang Dihua died, the status of the Crown Prince had risen, and all the major powers were much more polite and gracious towards Yang Lin.

Following closely behind the Crown Prince was the State Marshal, Qin Xiao. As soon as Qin Xiao appeared, everyone that was present from the military stood up and saluted. Even the two Great Generals rushed over to greet him. These past years, Qin Xiao's fame had been unparalleled within the hearts of the people. The citizens of Sky Fortune Kingdom may not know the name of the Emperor, but everyone recognized the name of Qin Xiao.

Flanking behind Qin Xiao was Qin Xingxuan and Muyi. As Qin Xingxuan appeared, she instantly attracted the wandering lustful gaze of every single aristocratic junior. Although these juniors clearly knew that they would never reach the level of Qin Xingxuan, they inevitably sent out peeking glances.

Lin Ming smiled at her from afar, politely greeting her. Just half a year ago, Qin Xiao had been an unattainable existence that was far beyond his reach. Even just seeing the carriage of the Marshal Quarters had filled his heart with a naïve sense of awe. But now, after coming to know Mu Qianyu, Lin Ming was somewhat indifferent after seeing Qin Xiao again. In the minds of Sky Fortune Kingdom's citizens, Qin Xiao was a living god. But outside of Sky Fortune Kingdom, he was only considered an ordinary Houtian realm martial artist.

In the eyes of existences like Mu Qianyu and those like her, someone like Qin Xiao was a completely negligible character.

At this time, the Elder who chaired the qualifying contest stood up after seeing the time. He said, “We shall begin drawing the lots.”

The qualifying contest was conducted via double-elimination. Of the five disciples, one would draw a bye, and the other four would pair up in duels. The defeated would enter the loser’s bracket, and the winner would continue onwards.

The defeated could still carry on in the contest. However, once they lost again they would be disqualified.

Finally, the victor of the winners bracket and the losers bracket would be the ones to participate in the Total Faction Martial Meeting.

Lin Ming placed his hand in the drawing box and fished out a jade tablet. On the jade tablet was written ‘first’. The deacon responsible for registering the competition numbers wrote Lin Ming’s number on the notice board.

Finally, everyone had drawn their lots.

The first round would be Lin Ming VS Jiang Bin, and the second round would be Ling Sen VS Zhao Jifeng. Ta Ku had drawn a bye.



After the schedule had been posted on the notice board, the enthusiasm of the audience reached a feverish pitch. Lin Ming was fighting in the first round; this was what they had all been waiting for!

In a distant corner of the martial stage, Jiang Bin was looking at the zealous audience. He coldly laughed.

Zhang Jifeng glanced at Jiang Bin, noticing his expression. He asked with a smile, "Are you dissatisfied?"

"Why don't you take a look at the audience? Is there even a single one that favors me? I don't think that any of them even know my name," Jiang Bin said with a sneer.

Jiang Bin was a fifth-grade martial talent. He was 18 years old and his cultivation had reached the peak of Bone Forging. Hopefully, if everything went as expected, he would breakthrough to the Pulse Condensation period before he was 20 years old. Although he admitted that his cultivation speed was far slower than Lin Ming, in terms of combat strength, he didn't believe he was any worse.

Who wasn't a talent here? Lin Ming may have defeated the early Bone Forging Zhang Guanyu when he had merely been at the Altering Muscle stage, but Zhang Guanyu was ultimately a non-core disciple. Just how fierce could he possibly be? Was there even any meaning in defeating someone like that?

As for the so-called miracles that Lin Ming kept creating, in Jiang Bin's opinion, these were all a joke. If defeating small fries like Zhu Yan and Zhang Cang could be considered creating a miracle, then miracles were too damn cheap!

Zhao Jifeng also sneered, echoing his opinion. "It's normal for these people not to have heard of us. After all, we aren't people of Sky Fortune Kingdom; why would the government publicize our achievements? These fools and misinformed losers are waiting for Lin Ming to crush you beneath his boot. You need to show these people just who you are."

"I may not roll over him, but at least I won't lose! Both of us are peak Bone Forging martial artists, and our true battle efficiency is higher than normal martial artists at the same level. Why would they think that I will lose so easily? What a joke!"

Jiang Bin came from the Jiang Family, an ancient martial cultivation family that was one of the four great martial families that existed on the edge of Sky Fortune Kingdom. Anyone that came from one of these four great families was born with inherent superiority and a loftily arrogant attitude. Not to mention that Jiang Bin was one of the most outstanding young disciples of the Jiang Family. Young people often were full of spirit and vigor; there was no way that Jiang Bin would willingly be placed underneath someone else.

"Once the competition starts and we go on stage, make sure you eliminate Lin Ming and I will eliminate Ling Sen. Then we'll see what sort of expression these bunch of fools will have."

Lin Ming was waiting on the stage. He was already holding the Heavy Profound Soft Spear, waiting for his opponent to show up.

Jiang Bin billowed with a formidable aura as he walked on stage. He looked at Lin Ming and sneered, "Lin Ming, I've heard many things about you. In the Seven Profound Martial House, you are a genius only seen once in a hundred years. But this so-called 'Seven Profound Martial House' only consists of non-core disciples; the four great martial cultivation families that surround Sky Fortune Kingdom are not included! Our four great martial cultivation families have a thousand years of history! We have legacies that you cannot begin to imagine!"

The four great martial cultivation families lived at the frontier of Sky Fortune Kingdom; occupying their own spiritual mountains. Truly, they had an inheritance that stretched back almost a thousand years. In these thousand years, the dynasty of Sky Fortune Kingdom had changed hands, and the ruling family had been overthrown six times. But during all this conflict, these four great martial cultivation families had always existed. No dynasty dared to move against them. If the four great martial cultivation families united, then they would be a monstrous force to be reckoned with.

"Oh? The four families already have a legacy of 1000 years? Lin Ming merrily smiled, then shook his head. A family with just a thousand years of history could be considered as having a deep heritage? That was really a waste of a so-called thousand year history.

Jiang Bin saw Lin Ming's smiling face and knew that he was

refuting his claims. He suddenly burned with anger. “Lin Ming, since you look down on my four great martial cultivation families, well then, I will let you experience the ancestral blade of Jiang Family!”

Jiang Bin wasn't sure who was stronger between him and Lin Ming, but after seeing Lin Ming underestimate him, his confidence of winning shot up by several points.

“Just you wait boy, I will make you pay for your rampant arrogance. I will defeat you within 20 moves. I want to see just what sort of expression your adoring audience will have!” As Jiang Bin thought this, the treasure long sword in his hand immediately began to congeal with thick true essence. This was a medium-grade human-step treasure sword, and was also considered at the pinnacle of its rank.

At this moment, the Elder who was acting as referee loudly announced the rules of the contest.

“You may use any treasure; there is no limit to the grade. If you willingly admit defeat or are lying injured on the ground, then you will automatically forfeit! You cannot kill the opposite party, and you cannot intentionally cripple them. The competition starts now!”

The voice had just fallen, but Jiang Bin had already gathered his power and taken a step forward, launching his movement technique to close in on Lin Ming. This was the ancestral movement technique that only the Jiang Family possessed – Traceless River!

Jiang Bin's body flashed and he dissolved into a series of shadows. His movements were simply like the floating clouds and flowing rivers; it was completely natural and filled with grace. The shadows gradually increased, until it was difficult to distinguish just which one Jiang Bin was.

The audience gasped in amazement as they watched this scene. They didn't know who Jiang Bin was, they only knew he was a core disciple of the Martial House. As for his strength, they were unsure. But because they blindly worshipped Lin Ming with raging fanaticism, they only regarded Jiang Bin as a minor side character, someone for Lin Ming to step on.

But now that they looked at him, they noticed that this Jiang Bin wasn't some common talent of his generation. A layman simply enjoyed the show, but an expert recognized the art. There were many martial artists present, including several generals that had reached the mid or late Pulse Condensation period, that were extremely startled after seeing this movement technique from Jiang Bin. Even though they were closely watching, they still couldn't see where Jiang Bin's real body was!

"Hehe, Jiang Bin is just being a deliberate show off. Of the four great family's movement techniques, the Jiang Family's Traceless River is the most beautiful and exquisite. A normal martial artist would simply have no means to counter this movement technique," Liang Long said in the crowd, as he was sitting down eating a pine nut.

"Lin Ming is not an ordinary martial artist. If Jiang Bin had

reached the point where he could advance and retreat like the flowing waters and be untouchable, then he would be able to defeat Lin Ming. But his movement technique is only 50% complete. Victory or defeat is still undecided. However, he should still be able to give Lin Ming some trouble.....” Zhou Yu had a good understanding of the Jiang Family’s Traceless River, and was able to immediately identify the level of Jiang Bin’s movement technique.

Just as many in the audience grew worried of Lin Ming, Jiang Bin drew his sword. But, it was more accurate to say that over a dozen Jiang Bins had drawn their sword.

The many sword rose at the same time, a thick true essence condensing at the sword point, substantialized into a visible sword light that reflected off the tip!

“Mm, true essence manifestation!”

With that, many of the audience gasped in amazement. True essence manifestation was usually only achievable by Pulse Condensation period martial artists, but Jiang Bin was only at the peak of Bone Forging.

“Moon Traversing the River!”

Jiang bin gave a loud shout, the sound coming from all sides, and the numerous swords thrust straight towards Lin Ming. This strike surged with momentum, true essence swelling forth just like a torrential river!

The dense rain of sword light made the audience's hearts tense up; how could one possibly hide from this?

Moon Traversing the River was one of the top three sword skills of the Jiang Family. Although Jiang Bin had spoken demeaning words towards Lin Ming, he didn't dare to underestimate his opponent!

“What good swordsmanship. The sword is the river, permeating all, seizing every weakness. When the Jiang Family's Moon Traversing the River and Traceless River are combined together, it is nearly unstoppable. Just how is Lin Ming.....”

Before Liang Long could finish half his thought, he was already stunned speechless.

He helplessly looked as Lin Ming didn't even use his Heavy Profound Silver Spear. Instead, Lin Ming only took a sudden step forwards, and punched out with his fist!

Body Tearing Bone Shattering Fist!

Bang!

The tiles under Lin Ming's feet shattered under the power of his step. 5000 vibrating true essence filaments erupted outwards, and plunged towards Jiang Bin like a savage Flood Dragon.

If Jiang Bin's sword was like the torrential river, then Lin Ming's vibrating true essence was the ferocious dragon that crossed the river!

Poh!

All of Jiang Bin's shadows were directly demolished, and Jiang Bin's main body was struck by Lin Ming's punch. Jiang Bin was sent flying backwards like a broken kite, and he vomited a mouthful of fresh blood. Even his sword was sent flying off in another direction.

Unless a martial artist was severely wounded, they would never abandon their blade. But, no matter how Jiang Bin tried to hold on, he couldn't keep his grip. A deadly and fierce vibration transmitted down the sword hilt and the resulting shock shattered the web of his palm!

Seeing Jiang Bin fall off the martial stage, the entire audience rose up in an uproar!

Although they believed that Lin Ming would win, they hadn't expected he would triumph in such a complete victory. That fellow Jiang Bin, who had thought that Lin Ming was trash, was actually thrown out by Lin Ming like a bag of trash. Lin Ming hadn't even needed to use the Heavy Profound Soft Spear.

Murong Zi stared on, her eyes unmoving. She mumbled, "It's only been two months, ah, damn your sister, how did this farm animal make so much progress? Do you really want to give this



sister a heart attack?”

## Chapter 227 – Ling Sen's Strength

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Liang Long shut his mouth, not even cracking the pine nut between his teeth. As he remembered his own haughty words from earlier, he felt his face heat up. He had said that he also wanted to go on stage and test out Lin Ming's ability, but presently, if he had gone on stage, he likely would have followed in Jiang Bin's footsteps. Liang Long was stronger than Jiang Bin, but by how much?

Was this really a peak Bone Forging martial artist? His strength was at least equal to a middle Pulse Condensation period martial artist.

Liang Long gulped. He couldn't help but glance at Zhou Yu next to him. Zhou Yu's face had sunk like a rock in water, and his eyes were gloomy. What he was thinking, no one knew.

Qin Ziya nodded from his seat of honor, unable to conceal his jubilant smile. This Lin Ming, after going out adventuring, his strength had increased by far too much upon his return. If it were two months ago when Lin Ming had only been at the Altering Muscle stage, then there was no way he would have been a match for Jiang Bin.

“Hehe, this kid probably has other cards up his sleeve. I'm really looking forward to what happens next.” Sun Youdao stroked his beard, his face full of smiles. To someone of his age and cultivation, it was impossible to make a breakthrough. Thus, he could only pride himself on producing the most excellent and talented of disciples. To Sun Youdao, this was the greatest comfort

and gratification he could have.

“Victory to Lin Ming!”

The competition’s referee Elder had also been distracted for a moment before he announced the result of this match. As an Elder of the Seven Profound Martial House’s Inner Circle, he clearly knew very well how strong Jiang Bin was. Although his cultivation was at the peak of Bone Forging, he could definitely fight evenly with a weak Pulse Condensation period martial artist.

But now he had actually been defeated by Lin Ming with a single move; didn’t this mean that Lin Ming could at least instantly kill a weak Pulse Condensation period martial artist? A peak Bone Forging boy that only needed a second to kill a Pulse Condensation period martial artist, what sort of absurd concept was that?

This elder wondered, after Lin Ming reached the Pulse Condensation period, would he also only need a second to kill him?

The referee gave Lin Ming a deep look, and then announced, “Second match, Ling Sen VS Zhao Jifeng!”

The second match was about to start soon. Jiang Bin had entered the loser’s bracket, but looking at the state he was in, there was no point in him doing so; it was impossible for him to be one of the top two contestants.

“It’s your turn to go on stage,” Ta Ku sighed and supportively

patted Ling Sen's shoulder, "It looks like there's no hope for me to go to the Total Faction Martial Meeting. I cannot defeat you, and now looking at Lin Ming, I know I cannot catch up to a monster like him. Aiyaa, after I graduate, I'll have to prepare to join the army."

Although Ta Ku shook his head and sighed, he still had a big friendly smile on his face. He wasn't particularly sad or heartbroken about this. After Lin Ming had returned, Ta Ku learned that Lin Ming's cultivation had already reached the peak of Bone Forging. He had a faint suspicion that he wouldn't be Lin Ming's match, but he hadn't thought that the gap between them would be so big.

"Mm. After I graduate I'll join you and also enter the army. It's most suitable for me there." Ling Sen silently withdrew his old heavy sword. He didn't have a spatial ring, so he carried the heavy sword on his back. Using this method, he had continually honed his connection with this sword, until he reached the realm of becoming one with his blade.

"Old friend Ling, if someone here is going to beat Lin Ming, it's going to be you. I think you'll have the best fight," Ta Ku said to Ling Sen as he looked afar, his gaze falling on Lin Ming.

Ling Sen was quiet. If what Lin Ming had displayed just now was his true strength, then Ling Sen could evenly match with him, and even win. But, could this really be the limit of Lin Ming's true strength?

Perhaps he had other unknown cards he hadn't shown.

Simply unfathomable!

This was what Ling Sen felt about Lin Ming.

After Ling Sen walked onto the stage, he immediately attracted the attention of everyone present; this was the Elder Senior-apprentice Brother of the Seven Profound Martial House's Heavenly Abode. He had quietly occupied this position for several years. Regardless of whether it was Zhang Guanyu or Ta Ku, they were far from his match. It was not clear how strong Ling Sen truly was. The rumors only stated that when he had been at the peak of Altering Muscle, his strength had surpassed the early Pulse Condensation period martial artists.

Now that Ling Sen had broken through to the Bone Forging stage, just what heights had his strength reached?

The hearts of everyone present were filled with fiery expectations, including Lin Ming; he was especially curious. Although Ling Sen's cultivation progress was slow, he had worked carefully and made steady and even progress, and finally his efforts had paid off.

Ling Sen's Ashura martial intent didn't assist in his cultivation. But, in terms of practicing a martial artist's combat prowess, it was able to achieve the maximum effect.

In this aspect, the ethereal martial intent was absolutely inferior.

“Ling Sen.”

As Ling Sen stood on the martial stage, he silently observed his opponent and reported his name. His voice was filled with an icy and murderous intent; this was the experience he had gained from endless slaughter within his Ashura martial intent.

“Zhao Family, Zhao Jifeng!” Zhao Jifeng’s voice was timid. After his friend had been thoroughly ruined by Lin Ming, Zhou Jifeng had lost his emboldened and haughty attitude. He didn’t feel that he was able to fully grasp Ling Sen.

“Damn, that Lin Ming is such a freak of nature. There is no way that I’m his match. I cannot lose this round to Ling Sen. If I’m defeated, then I will be forced out of the Total Faction Martial Meeting,” Zhao Jifeng thought to himself. His grip around the black saber tightened.

Although he didn’t expect to achieve great results at the Total Faction Martial Meeting, the Zhou Family’s Zhou Yu and the Liang Family’s Liang Long were selected as participants in the Martial Meeting. If he was eliminated, then it would bring shame to his family’s name. Later on, he would lose his standing within his family.

With this in mind, Zhao Jifeng gritted his teeth. Let’s fight!

The referee stepped onto the stage, and loudly announced, “I will not repeat the rules of the competition. The match begins now!

As the referees voice fell, Zhao Jifeng took a single step forwards and dragged his inky black saber outwards. As the saber curved, a black beam of light followed it, over several tens of feet long. This saber light was crescent-shaped. Looking from a distance, it was as if a large black moon had suddenly descended to earth.

“Falling Moon Cut!”

Zhang Jifeng cried out. He tightly grasped the black saber in both hands, and viciously cut at Ling Sen! This saber light was even able to block the sun; it was as if night had fallen!

Ling Sen’s eyes condensed. He wielded the heavy sword in his hands and struck out. His heavy sword was very slow; it was impossible to overtake Zhao Jifeng’s Falling Moon Cut. But in the moment that the saber and sword crossed each other, an incomprehensible scene took place.

Zhao Jifeng’s body suddenly stopped, as Ling Sen’s sword arrived in front of him

Peng!

An incomparably clear sound reverberated through the air; Zhao Jifeng’s Falling Moon Cut suddenly shattered like a piece of glass, breaking into countless tiny black shards!

Zhao Jifeng’s body shook, and he suddenly plopped downwards

like a bag of rice that fell from the air, heavily hitting the floor. He hadn't been cut by Ling Sen's sword wind, nor was he wounded. He hadn't even vomited blood. But in that instant, he had tumbled onto the ground and didn't rise back up.

Ling Sen retracted the heavy sword, placing it back onto his back, and turned around to walk away. He didn't even spare Zhao Jifeng a backwards glance.

The entire audience was dumbfounded. Obviously Ling Sen's sword light hadn't even touched Zhao Jifeng's body, so why did Zhao Jifeng suddenly hit the floor?

Liang Long, Zhou Yu, and the others didn't understand.

Lin Ming furrowed his eyebrows. His soul force was powerful, and his sense of perception was far sharper than a normal man. He had faintly felt something. Ling Sen had released some sort of murderous aura that penetrated into Zhao Jifeng's body, giving him internal injuries!

“Second match, victory to Ling Sen!”

The referee probed Zhao Jifeng's condition with his perception and found that no permanent damage had been done. He ordered several people to carry Zhao Jifeng down.

After the referee announced the result, the audience flew into an uproar. This....this was a victory? It was finished in a single strike,



and Zhao Jifeng hadn't even been touched. What was going on?

Listening to the excited chatter of the audience, Liang Long and Zhou Yu's faces were hung with embarrassment. Instead, they were now glad that almost no one knew about them, and didn't know their identity as martial cultivation family core disciples. Otherwise, they would really need to find a hole to crawl into.

Two matches in a row, two of the four great families' juniors had been eliminated. And not only that, but they were all defeated in less than a second!

Lin Ming was freakishly fierce, but why was Ling Sen also so abnormal?!? Both of Liang Long and Zhou Yu's strengths weren't much stronger than Zhao Jifeng and Jiang Bin. That is to say, Lin Ming and Ling Sen could also instantly defeat them.

.....

"This Ling Sen really gave me a pleasant surprise" Qin Ziya remarked as he watched Ling Sen's back as he left. He was secretly startled. He assumed that Ling Sen would not be Lin Ming's match. But now it looked as if the two people would have a good fight!

"It should be because of his spirit of slaughter! Ling Sen has no love or desire in his heart, only endless slaughter. This is the demon of his heart of martial arts. But at the same time, it is also a supreme weapon. His murderous intent can substantialize into an essence that be used in a direct attack. The reason that Zhao Jifeng paused was because he was compelled to do so by Ling Sen's killing

aura. This is a strength that can't be easily seen.”

Sun Youdao had lived for over 100 years. Although his strength as considered at the peak of his level, he had a very rich range of experiences, and was able to discern Ling Sen's attack methods with just a glance.

Qin Ziya said, “Not only that, but Ling Sen was able to gather and unite all of the murderous aura around him into a condensed form, creating a sort of killing domain. If one's strength is insufficient, it would be impossible to breakthrough this protection! To be able to create this sort of ability, Ling Sen's perception is simply terrifying! No wonder his strength grew so quickly! These past years I hadn't paid much attention to Ling Sen, and now his strength has actually reached this degree!”

“Hehe, this is something to be joyous about. I thought that the match between Lin Ming and Ling Sen would be a one-sided stomp, but this has added greatly to the suspense. Who do you think will win?”

Qin Ziya shook his head, “I don't know. In these matches, both Ling Sen and Lin Ming didn't use their full strength; they are still hiding most of their ability. We can only see whose hidden cards are fiercer. This time when we go to the Total Faction, I will petition for Ling Sen to become a core disciple. It's just too bad. Although Ling Sen is gifted, his martial arts cultivation talent is simply too ordinary. His cultivation speed is too slow.....”

Ling Sen was already 21 years old, and was only at the Bone Forging stage. He would probably reached the Pulse Condensation

period at 24 or 25, and would be over 30 before he reached the Houtian realm. When he achieved the peak Houtian realm, he would most likely be 40 or 50 years old. At that time, he would have already missed his best time to attack the Xiantian realm bottleneck.

As Ling Sen's match concluded, the qualifying competition entered into the second round.

Lin Ming would soon match up against Ling Sen and Ta Ku. As the audience thought of Ling Sen's overwhelming victory from a moment ago, they all became filled with enthusiastic fervor.

Sky Fortune Kingdom would gain an extreme martial master and the most thrilling about this was that it would be decided in the showdown between Lin Ming and Ling Sen!

This would be a fierce clash between two evenly matched opponents! It really made everyone's blood boil in excitement!

Even the two Great Generals present were hysterical with excitement. To someone like them, who had experienced countless life and death battles and had been through numerous difficulties in life, there was very little that would be able to fill them with so much ardor.

But now, they had once again run into the wistful passion that had driven them when they were young. In this collision between two top talents, who would come out on top?

State Marshall Qin Xiao was also looking at Lin Ming in a new light. The more he saw of him the more he liked him. If it weren't for his granddaughter Qin Xingxuan saying that she wanted to reach the Xiantian realm, and refused to consider anything about marriage, then he would definitely try to snatch Lin Ming to become his granddaughter's husband.

## Chapter 228 – Fighting Ta Ku

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\*Feet measurement is a bit shorter in this world. 7 Feet = 6 Feet. 9 Feet = 7.5 Feet

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“The second round of the competition will immediately commence. Do you two need any time to rest?” The referee Elder symbolically asked Lin Ming and Ling Sen. In truth, his opinion was that neither of them had wasted any effort at all; the two of them most likely didn’t need to recuperate.

Sure enough, Ling Sen and Lin Ming simultaneously shook their heads.

“Mm. Then let’s begin the second round.” The referee Elder took out the drawing box again. This time, the drawing box only held two plates. One was to fight, the other was a bye. Ta Ku had already drawn a bye, so this time it was up to Ling Sen and Lin Ming to draw lots.

At this time, Ta Ku spoke up, “There’s no need to draw anything. There’s only three people left, and I can defeat neither of them. But, I still want to have a match against Lin Ming. This has already been scheduled far in advance,” Ta Ku said as he looked at Lin Ming. “How about it Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, let’s have a little match on stage, is that cool with you?” You still have defeat me if you want the Blue Miracle Pill!”

Lin Ming laughed and agreed, “Why not?”

“What great fun, now we’re talking! Come on!” Ta Ku said as he

jumped up onto the martial stage. He also took out his own eight foot staff. The dark purple elastic iron staff was as thick as an egg, and two golden bands circled the staff. These golden bands were put in place to prevent the opponent's weapon from sliding down the shaft and wounding his fingers.

Lin Ming looked at Ta Ku's weapon and thought for a moment. Then, he pulled out his own Penetrating Rainbow spear from his spatial ring. Ever since he obtained the Heavy Profound Soft Spear, he hadn't used the Penetrating Rainbow spear for a long time. This time he took it out because he didn't want to take advantage of Ta Ku's weapon.

It was just too difficult to find a treasure staff, especially when one needed it to be elastic. For all these years, Ta Ku had been using the dark purple elastic iron staff.

Ta Ku saw that Lin Ming had swapped his weapon and smiled. "Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, there is no need for you to change weapons. To tell you the truth, since I came on stage today I didn't plan on competing against you in martial arts."

"Mm?" Lin Ming was startled, "If we're not going to have a martial arts match, then how do you want to settle this contest?"

Ta Ku cheekily grinned, and chuckled, "I want to compare strength!"

His voice was loud and clear; the entire audience could hear the words he said.

Hearing this, Murong Zi didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. If they weren't going to compare martial arts but instead just strength, then it was obvious that Lin Ming would be the one to lose. Ta Ku had inborn divine strength, and the cultivation method he practiced also tempered the body and increased strength.. He was the strongest disciple of the Seven Profound Martial House.

Lin Ming wasn't weak, but how could he compare to Ta Ku? She couldn't help but mutter to Jingyun, "Humph, Ta Ku that big gorilla, he usually looks so honest but who knew he was such a tricky beast. Although Lin Ming is a farm animal, a farm animal's strength is certainly less than a big gorilla....."

Bai Jingyun smiled at Murong Zi and vexingly said, "Since Ta Ku says that then he has already give up this match. He only wants to have a contest of physical strength with Lin Ming."

And just like Bai Jingyun had predicted, Ta Ku said, "Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, in terms of total power, I am far from being your match Therefore I will concede in advance."

"My speed is bad, my striking power is poor, and my cultivation isn't great. However, my physical strength is something that I am decent at. I know that Junior-apprentice Brother Lin also excels in this aspect. When you first entered the Seven profound Martial House, you were considered as having inborn divine strength and your early forms of fighting mostly involved meeting your opponent head-on physically. At that time I was thinking of waiting until your cultivation reached the same as mine, before having an earnest competition of body strength so we could see

who the number one in terms of strength at the Seven Profound Martial House is. So how about it?”

As Ta Ku said this, he casually bent the eight foot staff in his hands. The dark purple elastic iron staff, that was as thick as an egg, easily bent like a thin wooden stick, taking any shape that Ta Ku wanted it to.

Lin Ming saw this and burst into laughter. “Good! Then let’s compare strength! However, I will not take advantage of you. Our match will be decided by who has the greater strength. The one with the most physical strength will win!”

Ta Ku was stunned, he immediately rejected the idea, “There’s no need, I’m also looking forward to your showdown with Ling Sen. If I battle him there won’t be any meaning to it, and it would be quite boring. I’ve lost count of how many times I’ve been abused by that vicious fellow, I’d rather not have him publically embarrass me under the watch of such a big crowd of people.”

Ta Ku infectiously laughed as he explained. Lin Ming also smiled and challenged, “Even though you say that, do you think I will necessarily lose to you in strength?”

“I didn’t say that you would definitely lose, but....” Ta Ku slyly grinned, revealing a straight row of gleaming white teeth, “There’s a high chance that I’ll win today.”

“Haha, say nothing more, we’ll have a look ourselves!” As Lin Ming said this, he shook the Penetrating Rainbow spear in his



hands. The eight foot Penetrating Rainbow spear wobbled back and forth like a fiercely trembling spring.

“Good!” Ta Ku gave a loud shout, and there was a giant ripping sound as all of the clothes covering his upper body was torn apart, flying in all directions. He revealed a massive body glistening with thick and hard muscles, just like granite.

Ta Ku was nine-feet tall, nearly two heads taller than Lin Ming. When he stood in front of someone, he would block the sunlight from reaching them, like a massive iron tower. Normally a good man of Sky Fortune Kingdom was around 7 feet tall. If they were at this height, they could proudly call themselves a 7 foot tall son. But if someone like them stood in front of Ta Ku, they wouldn't even reach his shoulders.

As Ta Ku exercised his strength, all the muscles of his body began to send out explosive popping sounds. His impressive chest was thicker than a water barrel, and his massive thighs were larger than buckets. The blue veins that wound around his body were just like twisting earthworms. His build and size were simply too exaggerated, making the entire audience called out in alarm as they feasted their eyes. This fellow was simply...a big bear!

“Come!”

Ta Ku stamped his foot, and immediately squatted down in a horse stance. As his foot hit the floor, there was a loud explosion as the tiles underneath him shattered apart.

Lin Ming was unable to restrain a sigh of praise. The tiles of this martial stage had gone through special processing and were extremely durable. But with just a casual step by Ta Ku and only his human body strength, these tiles had been broken into pieces. This really was inborn divine strength!

Lin Ming also slowly stripped off his robe, revealing the well corded and shapely muscles he had been hiding underneath. Compared to Ta Ku's rock like muscles and solidly rugged exterior, Lin Ming's body seemed somewhat tender and supple.

As he had practiced martial arts for four years, Lin Ming had been exposed to countless hours of wind, rain, and exposure to sunlight. As he had also deboned for a long time, Lin Ming's body had been left with countless scars and callouses. However, after absorbing a colossal power of vitality and also having undergone the washing of his muscles and marrows multiple times, his callouses and scars had slowly flaked away over time. Now looking at the present Lin Ming, he seemed just like a wealthy young master that had never worked before.

Lin Ming was almost 16 years old. He had grown up into a tall young man. The child-like tenderness of his face had gradually vanished. Together with his beautifully sculpted muscles, it was very easy to overlook his true age. Although Lin Ming's looks couldn't be considered heavenly jade, he was still a very handsome and outstanding male specimen. As he stripped off his robe, there were some girls present that couldn't help but hysterically scream as they reached out their grasping hands at him.

“What a bunch of sluts!” Murong Zi disdainfully curled her lips.

In her opinion, Lin Ming's crazy Linmaniacs were just selling themselves off at a loss, because it was impossible that he would marry any of them. They likely knew that there was no hope in even becoming concubines, so what was the point of being such a bunch of sex-crazed nymphos?

Bai Jingyun smiled but didn't say anything. She also agreed with Murong Zi. It was impossible for Lin Ming to be contained within Sky Fortune Kingdom. One day, he would leave here.

As Lin Ming and Ta Ku faced each other on stage, their body structures were completely beyond compare. This really made many of those present worry; how could Lin Ming beat this big bear fellow in strength?

Lin Ming held the spear in his right hand, his forearm touched the spear shaft, and his elbow pressed down on the base of the spear. He extended Penetrating Rainbow horizontally, and took the Iron Bridge Blocks the River stance.

"Watch out!" Ta Ku fiercely tread both feet on ground. The tiles underneath him shattered apart, and his body was no different from a massive warship as it came rushing forwards.

"Hah!"

Ta Ku gripped the dark purple elastic iron staff in both hands and smashed down at Lin Ming.

Lin Ming dropped down into the horse stance, lifted the Penetrating Rainbow spear above him, meeting this strike of Ta Ku's head-on!

Bang!

The massive impact caused the tile under Lin Ming's feet to fracture. The two of them did not use any martial skill or cultivation method; what they used was completely and only physical strength!

Zhi Ga Zhi Ga —

As the staff and spear struck each other, they began to creak as metal bent. The spear shaft and staff shaft had already been bent together like a bow, overwhelmed, on the verge of being broken.

As the two powerful forces collided, the ground underneath the two of them began to produce thin cracks that spread out like a spider's web. The audience was watching with bated breath and fear; was this really the strength of a human?

Lin Ming felt the danger the Penetrating Rainbow spear was in. It wasn't hard to endure this strike, but he knew that if he gushed out with his full strength, he would definitely cause irreparable damage to his Penetrating Rainbow spear. This spear had followed him for such a long time; he couldn't bear to see it damaged like this.

“Let’s switch to another way. If we keep this up our weapons won’t be able to bear the load.” In such a tough fight, Lin Ming was still able to calmly speak. Obviously, he hadn’t used his full strength.

“I agree. How do you want to do this?”

“Let’s not use weapons. Let’s wrestle.”

Ta Ku thought for a moment, then growled, “I’m bigger than you are. If we wrestle, you’ll be at a disadvantage. We shall use the strength measuring pillar; that’s the most direct way!”

“Strength measuring pillar?” Okay!” After Ta Ku mentioned the strength measuring pillar, Lin Ming also wanted to know the limit of his own physical strength. He had forgotten how long it had been since he last used a strength measuring pillar.

This martial arts contest had taken a bizarre turn. Now this match boiled down to competing with a strength measuring pillar. The audience was also waiting with high expectations; they were curious as to what the limit of these two youths’ strength was.

“Referee, can you prepare a strength measuring pillar?” Lin Ming asked.

“Yes, of course I can.” The Seven Profound Martial House’s strength measuring room wasn’t too far away. The referee Elder gave a command and two martial artists ran over.

“Hehe, strength measuring pillar? I remember that just last year, this boy Ta Ku was able to achieve an 8000 jin result. At that time, he was only at the early Bone Forging stage. At that time, his cultivation was unstable as he had just started true essence Bone Forging. Now, he has reached the middle Bone Forging stage. Perhaps he might already have achieved the Large Success of true essence Bone Forging. This time he will definitely be able to hit over 9000 jins. 9000 jins....even a peak Pulse Condensation martial artist only has around 8000 jins of physical strength. This boy Lin Ming has really fallen into Ta Ku’s trap this time.” Sun Youdao smiled as he stroked his beard.

It wasn’t easy to increase one’s physical strength. Starting from early Bone Forging to middle Bone Forging, one’s true essence force would enhance several times over, but physical strength wouldn’t grow by that much. Therefore the advantage of inborn divine strength was less obvious the further one cultivated.

Qin Ziya smiled without a word. To Ta Ku, victory or loss was unimportant. All he wanted was to be known as number one in physical strength at the Seven Profound Martial House.

Ta Ku wanted to try his hardest and never give up.

“Lin Ming isn’t weak himself. I’m curious as to how high his level of strength is.”

The strength measuring pillar was quickly moved over, and affixed onto an array formation on stage. The black crystal

strength measuring pillar quickly stood in the center of the martial stage, waiting. The light in the crystal pillar could go up 12 feet. Every foot represented 1000 jins.

Ta Ku took to the stage with a wry smile. “Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, I’ll be going first.”

“Alright, you go first.”

## Chapter 229 – Over 10,000 Jins Of Strength

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As Ta Ku walked onto the stage, the noise from the crowd finally died down. As Ta Ku stood in front of the crystal measuring pillar, he was grasping his dark purple elastic iron staff. Suddenly, with a loud explosive sound, it was directly inserted into the ground, piercing through the tiled floor.

Ta Ku kneaded his fists, cracking his joints. The cracking sounds were just like mini thunderclaps.

He spread his legs, slowly lowering himself into a horse stance squat. He then took several deep breaths, completely stabilizing his mental and physical condition. He was just like a lion that was biding its time and energy in order to make a single, fatal blow.

The entire audience, including the Great Generals, Liang Long, Zhou Yu, and all else, were watching with bated breath, waiting for Ta Ku to strike.

Creak!

With another explosive sound of joints popping, Ta Ku clenched his right fist. He aimed it flush at his target and he slowly wound it back.

“Hah!”

Ta Ku gave a shout, and his entire body thrust forwards. His



right fist was like a meteor as it smashed the pillar. There was only the deafening sound of the crystal pillar being stuck as it trembled, almost as if it were about to explode. The crystal light erupted upwards like a geyser, until it rose even higher than Ta Ku.

Nine feet five inches.

9500 jins!

The entire audience were in uproar. This result exceeded the limits of a Body Transformation stage martial artist! Even a peak Pulse Condensation period martial artist would only have around 8000 jins!

Even Houtian realm martial artists would find it difficult to surpass 9000 jins! This was because the longer a martial artist cultivated, the more and more they would have to rely on their true essence. After all, there was a limit as to how high a human's strength could grow. As one approached that limit, it would become increasingly difficult.

Even Qin Ziya's own physical strength wasn't necessarily stronger than Ta Ku.

Everyone couldn't help but look at Lin Ming. It was true that Lin Ming was famed for his strength, but 9500 jins was simply like a mountain. It was beyond challenging past that!

“Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, it's your turn.” Ta Ku rubbed his

fists. He was quite satisfied with his result. Previously, he had done a few trials of his own and the highest score he achieved was 9500 jins.

Lin Ming walked onto the stage, and then, he touched the crystal column. He was testing the strength of the binding array. He felt that it was alright, it should be able to withstand his strength.

Everyone held their breath, waiting for Lin Ming's strike. They all wanted to know just how high he could reach.

Lin Ming relaxed his mind and body. He was just like a bow that was preparing itself to draw. 'Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians' was a Body Transformation cultivation method originally. When one practiced this, their true essence would become thick and mighty and their strength would become formidable. To those that practiced the 'Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians', their body had no limit. After Pulse Condensation was Tempering Marrow, and after Tempering Marrow, one could open the Eight Inner Hidden Gates and Nine Stars of the Dao Palace. At that stage, their body could affect the world. Their physical strength alone could shatter mountains and pull down stars.

Of course, Lin Ming was far, far from this realm. But these past months, he had absorbed a massive amount of blood vitality, and in addition, due to the enhancements to his body from the life and death smelting trial, his body's vitality was similar to a billowing cloud. His body always contained an explosive force that was waiting to erupt at any given moment. If he didn't vent this power, he wouldn't feel so great.

With a deep breath, Lin Ming lowered his center of gravity as he squatted down. His spine bent backwards, just like a taut bow that was being pulled backwards. With a roar, Lin Ming suddenly jumped up, his body flushing forwards, his fist like a Flood Dragon that emerged from the sea. With an indomitable momentum, his fist struck its target savagely.

Bang!

Over 10,000 jins of strength erupted. The fist cracked the crystal column underneath it with a tremendous impact. The black crystal column began to rattle violently, and the crystal light instantly shot to 12 feet. This was actually the limit of the strength measuring tablet!

Peng!

The loud sound of breaking glass rang in the air, and the crystal pillar exploded into countless shards. Clouds of true essence stone powder began to fall down like twinkling stars!

In that moment, the entire audience was flabbergasted.

“He destroyed the crystal pillar?”

“The crystal pillar can measure up to 12,000 jins of strength, and yet, it was actually destroyed?”

Qin Ziya was also eminently surprised. He knew that Lin Ming

had inborn divine strength, but he didn't know to what degree his divine strength had reached. Actually, no one knew. If that 12,000 jin crystal column was destroyed, it meant that Lin Ming's strength was at least above 13,000 jins!

Just relying on the strength of the human body to reach 13,000 jins! Let alone in the Sky Fortune Kingdom, this was rare even in the entire Sky Spill Continent! This was because after a martial artist reaches the Xiantian realm, their physical strength basically no longer increased.

Even an extreme Xiantian master's strength wouldn't surpass 10,000 jins.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk. A farm animal is really a farm animal, it simply can't be judged by others. I have no idea what sort of fodder he was fed while growing up."

Murong Zi had long since adapted to Lin Ming's bizarre abilities. She exclaimed in surprise in the past, but soon, she accepted this fact. She was longer surprised by any of the excessive miracles that Lin Ming accomplished. Instead, if one day Lin Ming ceased to continually violate common sense, Murong Zi would be surprised.

However, at this moment, Bai Jingyun, who was sitting next to Murong Zi, was also looking at the center of the martial stage, her eyes were clouded over and she was lost in thought. The truth was that 12,000 or 13,000 jins of strength didn't have much affect on one's combat prowess. It only indicated that Lin Ming had a special physique, inborn divine strength, or maybe, he had eaten some sort of valuable material that enhanced strength. But Bai Jingyun

had a very special feeling...

She was sure that Lin Ming had many more cards hidden up his sleeve! His strength was absolutely more than what he had revealed so far.

But reasoning told her that even if Lin Ming could instantly kill a peak Pulse Condensation master, it was still impossible for him to kill Ouyang Dihua in the situation he was. But, Lin Ming was an existence that continued to violate all norms and common sense. Who could predict what sorts of miracles he could create?

Ta Ku watched as the true essence stone powder landed on the floor, and he also saw that the crystal strength measuring column had been shattered apart. He let out a sigh, shook his head with a wistful smile, and said, “I admit defeat. I am sincerely convinced! If I reach the peak of Pulse Condensation, the most I will ever be able to achieve is 12,000 jins of strength. I wouldn’t be able to destroy the stone column. Junior-apprentice Brother’s amazing body leaves me speechless. I have nothing else to say!”

The crystal column didn’t have 12,000 jins randomly set as a limit. 12,000 jins could be said to be the limit of a human’s body.

Lin Ming said, “Senior-apprentice Brother Ta Ku, the truth is you don’t need to blindly pursue physical strength. There are many other aspects that you could place your effort in. After all, there is a limit to how high one’s strength can grow.”

To the martial artists of Sky Spill Continent, they did not

understand how to open the Eight Inner Hidden Gates and the Nine Stars of the Dao Palace. Thus, there was no future in only pursuing physical power. Refining and tempering the body was of some use, but after they entered the Houtian realm, a mere 10,000 jins of human strength would become insignificant.

Ta Ku humbly said, “I know this, but strength is my best aspect. In other roles, I’m not so good. First, I will breakthrough to the Pulse Condensation period, and then, I’ll slowly consider my options in the future.”

Ta Ku was 21 years old. He should be able to step into the Pulse Condensation period at around 23 or 24 years of age. At this age, he would have basically lost all value for a large sect to raise him. Even if he gave up joining any sects in favor of enlisting in the military, Ta Ku could still become a brave and wonderful general that slaughtered all his enemies.

Just imagine him on the battlefield. A man riding his horse, with a staff in hand, bringing down enemy generals with his mighty strikes. This kind of image was inspirational, and it would no doubt incite the growth of soldier morale. This was something that a martial artist, who specialized in true essence cultivation, would never be able to achieve.

Although Ta Ku could not enter a sect, he was destined to live a life of wealth, glory, honor, and status. It wouldn’t even be a problem for him to become one of the ten Great Generals. He would be at the pinnacle of the mortal world, and countless numbers of soldiers would look up to him in admiration.

It wasn't a bad thing to stay in the mortal world. He could live an easy-going and honored life in comfort, and he would enjoy two centuries of wealth and fame at least. He would be the subject of affection and reverence, and he could have countless wives and concubines.

Conversely, if he pursued the peak of martial arts, he was doomed to tread a road of suffering! He would have to explore his limits and seek fortuitous encounters, fighting with other masters and narrowly escape with his life! He would have to constantly and tediously cultivate, and he would have to live a lonely life. Although wealth and glory would be at his fingertips, to drown in this would only corrupt his martial spirit. To a martial arts master, they could go into seclusion for 10 or 20 years and not be able to enjoy any pleasures during it. This way of living was normal.

If one wanted to stand against their destiny and escape the endless Samsara, they had to experience pain and loneliness. Lin Ming, especially after having met Mu Qianyu, he had strengthened his resolve to pursue the pinnacle of martial arts.

A mushroom didn't know its beginning and end, and a mole didn't know spring or fall. A great figure of the mortal world, even if it were the State Marshal of Sky Fortune Kingdom, Qin Xiao, they would only live a mere 200 years or so. To a martial arts master who stood at the peak, people like Qin Xiao would only be a mole. At most, he would be a mole king.

The Sorcerer of the Southern Wilderness had lived for over 30,000 years, and he had left behind 72 Sorcerer Pagodas that would exist in perpetuity.

But to the common people of Sky Spill Continent, just what was tens of thousands of years? They could only listen to some legendary fables and stories that weren't even listed in the ancient texts. As the saying goes, paper lasts a millennia and silk lasts 800 years. Silk scrolls would decay in 800 years and paper books would decay in 1000. How could there possibly be any ancient texts from tens of thousands of years ago? Even if it is a legend that is passed down to descendants, most of it is probably made up stories.

Lin Ming didn't want to return to dust after a few hundred years. He wanted to free himself from the cycle of Samsara, and see just what the peak of martial arts was. What would it be like?

When Lin Ming walked off the stage, Zhao Jifeng and Jiang Bin watched him. They had already recovered, but seeing Lin Ming, they felt a deep sense of fear. Any thoughts of resisting had already fled their mind.

Although 13,000 jins of strength didn't equate to one's combat prowess, the scene of the shattering crystal stone pillar was simply too visually impacting.

Was he a human? Who had ever seen a crystal stone pillar destroyed like that? They had never even heard of it before.

Seeing Lin Ming approach, the two of them hastily stood up and quickly scurried away. To stand in the same place as an inhuman existence like Lin Ming was simply too stressful.



“Lin Ming, you can rest for the next quarter of an hour and adjust your condition.” The referee Elder said.

Lin Ming shook his head, “I haven’t used anything. There’s no need to rest, I can go up now.”

“Rest!” said Ling Sen. He was dressed in a tight black outfit with his trademark heavy sword on his back. “I want to fight you when you are in your peak condition, even if it means I lose!”

Lin Ming smiled and said, “Good! What you say is true. I too have long been looking forward to fighting you, from the first moment I saw you!”

The first time that Lin Ming saw Ling Sen was at the Seven Profound Martial House entrance examination. Ling Sen’s entrance on the stage had left an exceedingly profound impression on Lin Ming. His status as the Elder Senior-apprentice Brother of the Heavenly Abode was simply unshakable.

To the Lin Ming of then, Ling Sen had been an unreachable existence. But at that time, Lin Ming had also steeled his resolve that one day he would stand in an arena with Ling Sen and have an earnest match!

# Chapter 230 – Martial Intent Showdown

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“I too have long been awaiting this showdown. Ever since you defeated Zhang Cang, I thought I would have to wait several years, but I never imagined this fated day would arrive so soon!”

The first time Ling Sen had begun to pay attention to Lin Ming was when he saw Lin Ming’s duel against Zhang Cang. He had arrived at the scene together with Ta Ku, causing no small stir.

Lin Ming had only entered the Seven Profound Martial House for a trivial month, and yet he was able to defeat the Earth Hall master, Zhang Cang. At that time, Ling Sen had a premonition that he would eventually face Lin Ming one day. To him, this was already a very high evaluation of Lin Ming’s skills. But now looking back, it seemed that he had underestimated Lin Ming by far.

For a quarter of an hour, Lin Ming sat down in meditation, adjusting his condition to the peak even though he hadn’t consumed any of his strength.

With his thoughts completely relaxed, he entered into the ethereal state, waiting for this anticipated match.

The audience was already fidgeting with expectation. This long-awaited battle was a matchup between the fiercest top two young talents of Sky Fortune Kingdom!

This was a rarely seen once in a lifetime grand event. As far as a

martial artist was concerned, what could possibly be more exciting?

Although snow was falling from the sky, the burning enthusiasm of the audience seemed hot enough to melt the winter ice.

“Who will win?”

“Who do you think will win?”

“I wonder who will be the number one martial artist among our Sky Fortune Kingdom’s younger generation?”

.....

Almost the entire audience was discussing this issue. They each began to express their own views and opinions of the match. There were even some discerning ‘experts’ that were deducing how the fight would progress, even though the match hadn’t even started. Ling Sen and Lin Ming hadn’t yet fought, but already there were a good number of possible versions and outcomes that had been imagined, each of them narrated with a vivid intensity.

These stories were so vibrant and imaginative that if people didn’t know, they might even think that these spittle splashing martial artists had already seen the outcome of Lin Ming and Ling Sen’s match.

This fight would determine who was at the pinnacle of Sky

Fortune Kingdom's younger generation. But, Ling Sen actually thought that his chances of winning weren't high. Even if he won, he also wouldn't take the position of the number one youth talent. He was already 21 years old, while Lin Ming was almost 16. This 5 year age gap between them was an insurmountable divide.

These 5 years were the most important and essential years of a martial artist's life. Five years later, Lin Ming would definitely become a Houtian master.

But at that time, Ling Sen would have only broken through to the Pulse Condensation period.

A quarter hour passed quickly.

Ling Sen was the first to walk onto the martial stage. His pace was steady, calm, and his entire being exuded a murderous aura. The snow that fell towards him was blown away by this aura; not a single snowflake landed on his body.

Lin Ming took out his Heavy Profound Soft Spear. His spear and Ling Sen's sword were both medium-grade human-step treasures; the weapons were fair and equal.

The two stood 100 feet apart, silently gazing at the other. The surrounding airflow around them was disturbed by their presence, as if an invisible vortex had been summoned. Billowing snow recklessly covered the sky.

“The rules will not be repeated. Match, begin!”

After the referee Elder announced the start of the match, the two of them on stage hadn't even moved. Lin Ming's right hand gripped the Heavy Profound Soft Spear outwards, the spear tip slanted towards the ground. Ling Sen had his heavy sword in both hands, the hilt pressed against his chest.

Although they hadn't moved, the two of them were slowly beginning to gather their momentum.

Ling Sen's murderous aura was formed from his countless beheadings and massacre of the Ashura Devils within his Ashura martial intent. If a weaker martial artist were to directly confront Ling Sen's murderous aura, it would be the same as if an average man were standing stark naked in a frozen world of snow and ice. They would only be able to use half of their strength, and those whose minds weren't as aware, might even be directly struck by dread and forced into defeat without having done anything.

But Lin Ming was the opposite. His imposing and majestic aura was formed by the power of his vitality. The force of his powerful spirit was like a billowing flame that reached the clouds. An ordinary person might not feel anything strange, but if a martial artist that cultivated dark arts of technique involving the usage of evil spirits approached, then they would feel as if they were in a blazing inferno. Any ghosts or demons that drew near would be immediately returned to nothingness.

Ling Sen's icy cold murderous aura and Lin Ming's power of vitality engaged in an airborne battle. One was freezing cold and

the other was burning hot. As these two forces met, they would battle. Ice would not coexist with fire!

But eventually, Lin Ming's billowing vitality overcame Ling Sen's Yin chill. Ling Sen could even clearly hear his murderous aura being chipped apart by Lin Ming's power of vitality.

'I never thought that someone would be able to suppress my Ashura murderous intent with just the strength of their blood vitality!'

His speed was like a phantom, his body strength was formidable, his true essence was pure and thick, and he also had the support of an overwhelming blood vitality; his endurance was without a doubt terrifying. This Lin Ming was simply versatile in all aspects!

Ling Sen's expression became more dignified. He instantly converged all of his murderous aura, condensing that murderous essence onto the surface of his body in conjunction with his heavy sword. At that moment, he was like an insurmountable existence in the eyes of all present.

Even the two Great Generals in the audience, who had reached the middle and late Pulse Condensation period, were unable to help but wonder if they could win against Ling Sen if they fought.

For a middle Pulse Condensation period martial artist to not be able to defeat an early Bone Forging stage martial artist. that was simply an unimaginable fantasy.

“Meet my sword!”

As the word ‘sword’ was said, the murderous aura that was concentrated on Ling Sen’s body began to flow into the black heavy sword. This five foot long heavy sword began to emit a piercing cry!

Cha!

It was as if space itself was torn asunder. A peerless sword wind shot forwards like a dark rainbow, piercing towards Lin Ming’s chest.

The entire area was swept up by the aftermath of the sword wind; even the tiles cracked and exploded under the pressure. Countless broken stones that were crushed by true essence was thrown into the wind. From afar, Ling Sen’s blade was like a missile that left the ground shattered in its path; it was simply unstoppable.

“Flood Dragon Goes to Sea!”

Lin Ming gave a loud shout and 5000 vibrating true essence filaments erupted outwards. Towards the surging tide of true essence that rolled towards him, the Heavy Profound Soft Spear was like a silver Flood Dragon, thrusting forwards with a grandiose momentum!

Bang!

The powerful impact formed a shockwave that was visible to the naked eye. The loose floor tiles were all sent flying backwards, and all the snow in a radius of a hundred meters was swept clean. The savage true essence continued to flood outwards. Being met with this rush of true essence, even a Flesh Training or Viscera Training martial artist felt as if they were mere leaves in a storm; they could be blown away at any moment!

Fortunately, the important personages in the audience had master bodyguards protecting them. A true essence shield was put up, guarding them from the aftermath of the true essence collision.

Peng peng peng peng peng peng!

After Ling Sen made his first move, he no longer stopped; following up his first strike with a series of attacks. The heavy sword carried an epic majesty as thick true essence congealed into each sword strike. Every strike contained an immense potential, as if a mountain were crashing down!

Lin Ming unhurriedly and calmly revolved the True Primal Chaos Formula to the limit. He steadily blocked each strike, slowly retreating backwards. But no matter how calm his expression was, every time he took a blow the stage behind him would explode, sending everyone watching into alarm!

Lin Ming took a step back after every strike and every time he stepped backwards, the stage tiles would explode into pieces. Then, Ling Sen's sword wind would lift up all these fragments, before



throwing them off the stage. In just a few moments of time, the entire stage had become very unseemly.

“This is too terrifying. Just the true essence that is scattered from their strikes already carried such destructive power. If one were to face them head-on in a fight, how could anyone possibly resist?” There were some martial artists, that believed they were strong, watching the battle on stage. As they saw the match unfold, they were gradually filled with abject depression. They had been cultivating for several dozens of years, but yet there was such a big difference between them and the two youths on stage.

“Ling Sen’s strength is at least equal to a normal middle Pulse Condensation period martial artist. He might even be able to compete with the late Pulse Condensation period!” After the masters present made some comparisons, they couldn’t help but draw this conclusion.

For someone with an early Bone Forging cultivation to cross over an entire realm and surpass someone at the middle Pulse Condensation period was simply incredible.

Bai Jingyun listened to the arguments occurring around her and silently gazed at Lin Ming’s figure, her expression complex.

Lin Ming, what cards do you hold in your hands? Just what is the limit of your power?

The battle on stage was becoming increasingly intense. True essence collided in the air causing deafening explosions, as if they

were in the middle of a roiling spring thunderstorm.

However, during the fight, Lin Ming's face wasn't flushed; his heartbeat was normal. His blood vitality was vigorous, and his breath was long, he inhaled like a snake and exhaled like bellows. In such a calm state, a single breath was enough to let him fight for an incense stick of time.

But Ling Sen had slightly less stamina.

“Slaughter Aura!”

Ling Sen gave a loud shout, and his Slaughter Domain broke forth. This was a specialized domain attack that he developed using the Ashura martial intent! When he had faced Zhao Jifeng, Ling Sen's sword hadn't even touched his opponent's body. This was because he had used the Slaughter Domain to defeat his enemy!

Huooo!

In that moment, Lin Ming's surroundings instantly changed. The audience vanished, all became quiet, and the stage under his feet disappeared; he arrived in a completely new and strange world.

The world was cast in a dim bleak gray. The sky overhead was coloured in a dull beige tones. Endless rocky outcroppings dotted the world, and behind these rocks were hiding countless Ashura Devils.

Between the giant rocks, there were bottomless pits that seemed to lead into an abyss, exuding a limitless yin cold. Ghosts constantly crawled out from this abyss. Their expressions were ferocious, and they hungrily gazed at Lin Ming with their empty eyes, trembling with greed and desire for human life.

This extremely cold feeling was like a freezing wind that could drill its way into a person's soul. Even though Lin Ming had exuberant blood vitality, in such an environment, he still felt as if he were being pushed down upon.

Ashura?

So this is the Ashura martial intent attack!

A martial intent wasn't only used in cultivation; some could also be used offensively. It all depended on a martial artist's utilization and comprehension, but also the inherent quality of the martial intent.

This Ashura martial intent was a martial intent that cultivated battle!

From this aspect, it was superior to even Lin Ming's ethereal martial intent.

However, Lin Ming didn't only possess the ethereal martial intent.

Lin Ming gave a cold snort, and both of his eyes turned into swirling black vortexes. Two rotating storms appeared. With Lin Ming's eyes as the center, they indiscriminately swept out!

Wu wu wu wu wu!

The countless devils emitted heart piercing screams. However, they were unable to resist the pulling force of the tornado and were swept inside the vortex, shredded into fragments!

The gray rocks they hid behind disintegrated under the power of the vortexes; even space itself began to crack under the immense pressure.

“These are only Ashura Devils formed by a martial intent; how can it be equal the hell found within the life and death smelting trial?”

Lin Ming let loose a resonant roar.

Peng!

With a bang, the dark world collapsed!

The countless illusionary fragments were all swept into the giant swirling black vortex and completely vanished into oblivion.

Lin Ming's Samsara martial intent was comprehended after experiencing the world of 100 Samsaras. In terms of illusion attacks, how could Ling Sen possibly compare!?

Lin Ming appeared back on the familiar martial stage. Across him, Ling Sen gave a stuff cough and kneeled down onto the stage, supporting himself with his heavy sword, his face pale.

The audience was baffled. They only saw Lin Ming pause for a moment, and then Ling Sen fell to his knees as if he had been heavily struck. In this period of time, Lin Ming's spear hadn't even touched Ling Sen.

Just what was going on?

## Chapter 231 – Divine Punishment Blade

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When Qin Ziya saw this scene, his expression immediately changed, “Ling Sen’s Slaughter Domain was broken by Lin Ming!”

In the illusion realm, time flowed at a different speed. In the moment when Lin Ming had ceased physical movement, a fierce battle against Ling Sen had already taken place within the Slaughter Domain. The result was obvious; Ling Sen had been defeated, and Lin Ming had emerged victorious.

“How could this happen.....Ling Sen’s Slaughter Domain is dependent upon his Ashura martial intent as well as the murderous aura he had accumulated over the years in order to create his own unique ability. Although this makes it easy to develop a demon in the heart, in terms of striking power, it should be very strong. Ling Sen’s Ashura martial intent is, by itself, savage and brutal; it only helps cultivate one’s attack power. As for Lin Ming’s ethereal martial intent, that relies on placing one’s mind into an empty unconscious state; it is a type of supplementary cultivating martial intent. How could the result be that Ling Sen loses?”

Although Sun Youdao’s cultivation wasn’t too high, he had a deep and broad range of experience. In just a few words he had pointed out the characteristics between Ling Sen and Lin Ming’s martial intent.

Qin Ziya pondered out loud, “I had also thought that his ethereal martial intent could only be used to cultivate. If it could also be used offensively, then I can only say that Lin Ming’s perception is

just too terrifying.”

How a martial intent could be used not only depended on one’s studying and understanding of it, but also one’s perception.

“Maybe it’s not an attack, but it was able to stabilize his mind, therefore he was able to shatter Ling Sen’s martial intent dream world. In any case, Lin Ming is truly a genius.”

The two Seven Profound Martial House Master’s only thought was that Lin Ming’s perception was amazingly astonishing, and he had comprehended multiple ways to use the ethereal martial intent. They had never dreamt of the possibility of Lin Ming comprehending a second martial intent.

If they had known, they would be stunned speechless. A martial artist that could comprehend two different kinds of martial intent only existed in ancient legends and fairytales. Let alone Sky Fortune Kingdom, even in the entire 36 Kingdoms ruled by the Seven Profound Valleys, there hadn’t been anyone that had ever realized two different martial intents.

Although Lin Ming had broken Ling Sen’s Slaughter Domain with his Samsara martial intent, he actually felt a bit discontented. There was only one reason that he was able to accomplish this – his Samsara martial intent was of a far higher grade than Ling Sen’s Ashura martial intent.

However, in terms of development and usage, he was far inferior to Ling Sen.

Ling Sen had studied and pondered upon his Ashura martial intent to the limit, digging out all of its latent potential. In reverse, Ling Ming knew very little about his Samsara martial intent except that it was able to cultivate the soul. Also, because he hardly used his soul force, he hadn't carefully studied his Samsara martial intent.

‘In understanding, I am inferior to Ling Sen.’

Lin Ming sighed with emotion. The truth was, he had forgotten that in just these past six months he had obtained too many abilities that needed to be carefully perceived and studied through meditation over time. There was the Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians, inscription technique, Flow like Silk, Heretical God Force, ethereal martial intent, Golden Roc Shattering the Void, Samsara martial intent, and so many other things that he needed to thoroughly consider. There were so many things on his plate that he found it difficult to balance.

The fact that he could cultivate Flow like Silk to 5000 filaments while also achieving his current results in the Heretical God Force and Golden Rock Shattering the Void, was because he had the assistance of the mighty elder's memories. Although, this also meant that Lin Ming's perception could be considered very good.

But Ling Sen had already obtained the Ashura martial intent long ago, and he had combed over every aspect of it throughout the years. In terms of martial intent comprehension, it naturally wasn't something that Lin Ming could compare with so far.



At this moment, Ling Sen stood up. His complexion recovered from its pale state, and he brandished his heavy sword across his chest. He sighed and said, “Lin Ming, throughout all these years, you are the one martial artist that I admire the most out of the entire younger generation of Sky Fortune Kingdom. I had long been looking forward to this battle against you. Now that my Slaughter Domain has been broken, I’m already half-defeated. Still, I hope that you won’t go easy on me; I still want to see just how much strength you have hidden within you.”

“Good! Come!”

Against an opponent like Ling Sen, Lin Ming only had heartfelt admiration. This was a true martial artist who single-mindedly pursued the path of martial arts. As for those like Zhang Guanyu and Ouyang Dihua, they only practiced martial arts in order to consolidate their status and position. They would have power, and more time to enjoy wealth, beauties, and authority.

The Heavy Profound Soft Spear crossed out, a purple thunder leapt onto its bright silver spear point!

The winding arcs of thunder twisted around like snakes, crawling up the shaft!

Summoning the power of thunder meant that Lin Ming no longer held back. He would defeat his opponent with everything he had!

This was a martial artist’s respect for another.

As Ling Sen gazed upon this scene, his eyes narrowed. This was....control over the power of thunder?

Qin Ziya and Sun Youdao couldn't keep still. Not even Qin Xingxuan, Qin Xiao, Mui, or Bai Jingyun were unaffected. They all stared wide-eyed, unblinking.

Thunder-attributed martial artist?

Most martial artists had no specific attribute to their true essence. But, there were a few whose true essence was associated with the five elements. For instance, Bai Jingyun's water attribute and Zhu Yan's fire attribute.

Compared to non-attribute true essence, these five element true essences offered many special abilities. However, the tradeoff was that they were limited in the cultivation methods and skills they could learn. It was difficult to say whether this was ultimately good or bad.

Besides the five element aligned true essence, there were also the forces of wind and thunder that existed beyond the five elements of nature.

There were exceedingly few who had these two kinds of true essence attributes, but, they were also much stronger than the five elements.

Especially the thunder attribute. In terms of attack speed, it went

against the will of the heavens. Even if one searched the entire Sky Fortune Kingdom, there weren't many thunder-attributed martial artists. And not only that, even if they were of the thunder attribute, it didn't mean that they were a good match. Even if they practiced a thunder-based cultivation method, they wouldn't necessarily achieve any results.

But now looking at Lin Ming, it appeared that he had the power of thunder at his beck and call. Not only that, but there was a prodigious energy contained within. He had clearly cultivated it to the Large Success stage.

How was this possible? In just half a year Lin Ming had managed to comprehend a thunder-based cultivation method?

"It looks like during his adventure, Lin Ming also experienced another fortuitous encounter," Qin Ziya applauded, somewhat envying Lin Ming in his heart. There were many lucky opportunities that could be found with the Sky Spill Continent. However, these lucky opportunities were often fraught with peril. There was fortune that just lay there for one to pick up. However, if one wished to obtain it, one had to have the courage while also putting in 120% of their effort.

These opportunities were fleeting; only those martial artists that were prepared could reach for them.

Sun Youdao sighed with emotion, "This kid is just too scary. If he just cultivated, with his combat talent, he would certainly reach the Xiantian realm, even the extreme Xiantian realm. But if he is able to attain the fortunes that come with danger, then he might

reach the Revolving Dan realm, or an even higher existence!”

“This sort of martial artist must not only have cultivation and combat talent. They also have to have a firm mind and be incomparably calm. They must act bold, be fearless, daring to do what no one else does! In front of a fortuitous encounter, just a little bit of hesitation will cause them to lose their chance.”

Lin Sing looked at the thick electric arc that was twisting around Lin Ming’s spear point and suddenly laughed, “Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, today I, Ling Sen, have truly gained in experience. It is a rare opportunity and honor to be able to fight a martial artist who has reached Large Success in thunder cultivation!”

“You may have broken my Slaughter Domain, but I also have a martial skill!”

As Ling Sen said this, he gripped his 5 foot long heavy sword horizontally outwards. The hilt of the heavy sword was very long; it would take at least 4 or 5 hands to cover it.

“Divine Punishment Blade – Purple Air Comes From the East!”

Bang!

Ling Sen tread the ground, and pulled the five foot long heavy sword around him, drawing a perfect arc on the ground. True essence manifested as a silver shark that was plowing a path through a sea of ice.

In that moment, Ling Sen had gathered all of his murderous aura, his momentum reaching the extreme.

“It’s Purple Air Comes From the East! This is Senior-apprentice Brother Ling’s strongest skill!”

“This is a high-grade human-step martial skill. In addition, it is at the pinnacle of high-grade human-step martial skills. I heard that there are six different moves within the Divine Punishment Blade, and this Purple Air Comes From the East is the strongest sixth move. I hadn’t thought that I would be so fortunate to see Senior-apprentice Brother Ling display this skill today!

Hearing the name Purple Air Comes from the East, those outside martial artists in the audience didn’t react much. However, the Seven Profound Martial House disciples were incomparably excited to the point of almost frothing at the mouth. When one was below the 100 rankings of the Seven Profound Martial House, they could only choose a low-grade human-step martial skill. If they entered the top 100, then they could choose a medium-grade human-step martial skill.

There were few true high-grade human-step martial skills. Ling Sen had been especially permitted to practice the ‘Divine Punishment Blade’, which was at the apex of all high-grade human-step martial skills!

Most disciples only heard rumors about this, but when would they ever have the opportunity to see it?

Now, they would personally experience its majesty. Not only that, they would also be able to see the strongest sixth move of the Divine Punishment Blade; how could they not be feverish from excitement?

Facing off against Ling Sen, Lin Ming still displayed his eternally unchanging stance, Iron Bridge Blocks the River. This style was not fancy; it was a simple pose that was the most fundamental of spear skills. What Lin Ming depended on was his pure and thick true essence.

At this time, the five foot heavy sword in Ling Sen's hand had already turned into a vibrant and flawless purple color, as if a flame was burning on the blade. At this moment, Lin Ming's momentum had reached its peak.

“Take my sword!”

With that final word, Ling Sen stepped forward. The sword was like black lightning; it carried a vast power that roared towards Lin Ming. In a blink of an eye, he had closed the 200 feet distance that separated them!

True essence wildly fluctuated. Purple flames ignited the air. Ling Sen's sword was like a mountain as it smashed downwards.

Lin Ming's vision sharpened, and the Heretical God Force activated. Highly compressed true essence and the power of thunder erupted outwards; the Purple Flood Dragon Divine

Thunder began to issue out cries of excitement. A thick arc of lightning jumped onto the silver spear, wrapping around it like thick python, directly striking out to meet Ling Sen's sword.

The Heretical God Force was open, and power of thunder had also been galvanized; this was a strength that wasn't any lower than a peak Pulse Condensation master!

Bang!

The ground beneath suddenly shook, and Ling Sen's condensed Purple Air Comes From the East was struck by the thunder. It was no different than pure white snow basking in the summer sun; it rapidly melted!

“What?”

Ling Sen was shocked. His strongest strike was actually broken apart like this?

In that split second, Ling Sen hesitated. The thick purple electric snake burst through the purple cloud and directly struck Ling Sen's body. In that moment, Ling Sen felt his entire body go numb, and even his heart stopped beating.

In that moment, he even thought he would die.

However, that feeling soon passed. That thick electric snake drilled through his body and howled as it pierced into the sky. In a

few moments it submerged into the clouds above.

At this time, the sky was still snowing, and dark clouds covered the martial stage. After that thick electric snake broke into the cloud, faint sparks of lightning were seen, and a rumbling thunder began to sound through the air.

This was like a winter thunderstorm!

There was no snow in summer, and no thunder in winter.

Seeing thunder billowing in the sky, the entire audience was shocked speechless. With his own strength, Lin Ming had moved the heavens and created thunder, even changing the laws of nature. What sort of nonsensical exaggeration was this?

Was this really something that a Body Transformation martial artist could achieve?

Qin Ziya looked up at the sky and let loose a breath. This was far from changing the laws of nature. But, to be able to create thunder in the clouds, the intensity and ferocity of that thunder strike was simply too astonishing.



## Chapter 232 – Awakening Thunder

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“Brother Sun, our Seven Profound Martial House has really picked up a gem. Lin Ming’s thunder fusion has probably reached fifth, or even sixth grade...”

A martial artist’s martial talent had a grade, and the fusion compatibility that a martial artist had with metal, wood, water, fire, earth, wind, and thunder, also had a grade, each corresponding to each other. A sixth grade fusion was something that hadn’t been seen in the entire Sky Fortune Kingdom for millennia!

Sun Youdao nodded, “If it really is a fifth or sixth grade fusion, then indeed. I think it is strange how I never noticed Lin Ming’s potential to cultivate lightning. This Lin Ming, the more I look at him, the less I understand.”

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“I lost.” Ling Sen let a dreary breath loose. The difference in their strength was simply too great. In that flash a moment ago, if it weren’t for Lin Ming’s amazing control of the thunder force, his heart would have stopped beating and even his body would have been charred black.

His own strongest strike could not even halt half of the opponent’s blow. He sincerely admitted defeat.

“Well fought.” Lin Ming humbly said as he put his spear away,

cupping his fists in respect.

Ling Sen was silent for a moment, and then he asked, “Was that your strongest strike?”

Lin Ming had opened the Heretical God Force slightly while spurring the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. This was indeed most of his strength. Of course, he had Thunderfire Annihilation and the Coiling Dragon steel needle as well, but these two powers contained a massive killing potential. Unless he went all out in desperation, he normally wouldn't use it.

Lin Ming nodded and said, “Yes.”

After hearing Lin Ming's less than positive answer, Ling Sen sighed with emotion. One should always strive to get to the top, and there would always be someone beyond him. He suddenly felt that after he graduated, joining the army might not be the wisest choice.

When Lin Ming had left the Seven Profound Martial House to adventure, he had obviously found some sort of lucky opportunity. Otherwise, there was no way that his strength would have grown so fast.

Although Ling Sen's combat prowess was far beyond a martial artist at the same level, his talent was limited, and he would find it difficult to reach the Xiantian realm in his entire life. But there was simply too big a difference between the Xiantian realm and Houtian realm. To defeat weak Pulse Condensation period martial

artist with only Bone Forging cultivation was stunning, but there were talents in every country that could do the same thing.

But for a peak Houtian master to defeat a Xiantian master, there might not even be one in the entire Seven Profound Valley's 36 countries that could do this!

After joining the army, Ling Sen would absolutely become one of the ten Great Generals. He could even become a State Marshall like Qin Xiao. But if it were only this, it would be impossible for him to break through the bottleneck and reach the Xiantian realm.

After his fight with Lin Ming, Ling Sen firmly decided that he would leave Sky Fortune Kingdom and find his own lucky chance!

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The winner's bracket had ended, and according to the original rules, the loser's bracket would begin. But, Ta Ku was the first to forfeit. Zhao Jifeng and Jiang Bin looked at each other and could only ruefully smile before similarly forfeiting. Although Ling Sen had been defeated by Lin Min, he could still deal with them just like chopping a chicken. There was simply no reason to disgrace themselves.

So the final two spots for participation in the Total Faction Martial Meeting were given to Ling Sen and Lin Ming.

The total list of names was: Qin Xingxuan, Zhou Yu, Liang Long,

Ling Sen and Lin Ming.

This news spread like the wind. Ling Sen and Lin Ming were both recognized as the fiercest two in the group of five.

The battle between Lin Ming and Ling Sen also spread through Sky Fortune City like wildfire. Everyone who watched the competition of top talents was incomparably excited to tell everyone else. For those that hadn't watched the match, after listening with wringing hands, they would excitedly beat their chests and stamp their feet. Many people would regret that they didn't have the qualifications to enter the Seven Profound Martial House and personally watch the competition. Otherwise, how could they possibly miss such an event?

The bards and storytellers of Sky Fortune Kingdom also retold this story. They started with the exact events, but as time passed, each version became more and more exaggerated. But no matter which version of events was told, the one scene they would never forget is Lin Ming galvanizing a winter thunderstorm.

With his own strength, he moved the thunder of heaven and earth!

The words of these storytellers sounded like fantasy, but on that day, the people of Sky Fortune City also saw that winter thunderstorm. But even if they saw this sight, everyone found it hard to accept. Using one's own power to alter the laws of nature? What sort of concept was that?

There was no snow in summer and no thunder in winter, this was common knowledge.

It was said that yesterday, there was a lover that pledged to the winter thunderstorm, inciting it with his true love.

The lover said: “if the winter thunder rumbles, then my love will be eternal and without regret.”

The girl that heard this was incomparably touched and moved because of this holy promise. But, although it was romantic, she knew that he was playing around...

As the lover pledged this, in the next quarter hour, the sky filled with thunder.

The lover was immediately dumbfounded, his mouth wide enough to stick an egg in.

At this time he only had one thought: “Motherfucker, heavens, are you playing with me!?”

The truth was, the common people simply didn't understand the difference in strength between martial artists and their corresponding divisions. However, to create thunder in winter was actually too shocking for everyone. Wasn't this just the same as god?

Before, Lin Ming's name had been mainly known among the

aristocracy as a martial artist. But now, even the commoners knew that there was a young martial artist in the Sky Fortune Kingdom named Lin Ming, who had incomparably fierce strength, and was able to call down heavenly thunder.

.....

Zhou Mountain peak, Martial House Main Hall —

Qin Ziya sat in the main seat, followed down the row by Lin Ming, Ling Sen, Qin Xingxuan, Zhou Yu, and Liang Long. In addition, there was a blue-clothed old man. This old man was the Seven Profound Martial House’s Deputy House Master, Sun Youdao.

Qin Ziya’s gaze swept over the 5 youths one at time. Finally, it landed on Lin Ming. Although Qin Ziya had long concluded that Lin Ming would blossom in dazzling radiance in the future, he had never thought that this young boy would make so much progress in such a short time. It was just too shocking. To have such strength at his age, let alone Sky Fortune Kingdom, he would be a top figure even in a large sect.

Obviously, Lin Ming had encountered a fortuitous opportunity when he went out on adventure. It was rare for a martial artist to encounter a lucky chance outside, but it wasn’t uncommon. Thus, Qin Ziya didn’t press him for details. Everyone had their own secrets. As long as he wasn’t traitorous or disloyal, it was fine.

If it wasn’t for Lin Ming being so young, he would have the grand

opportunity to seize first place!

If he really did manage to grasp first place, that would be an unprecedented record in the Seven Profound Valleys. According to what Qin Ziya knew, there had never been a disciple outside of the Total Faction that was able to attain first place at the Total Faction Martial Meeting.

However, the current Lin Ming had a very high chance of reaching the top 20.

Qin Ziya wasn't underestimating Lin Ming. It was just that the geniuses of the Total Faction were simply too strong. These top talents all had the qualifications to seize first place. At 19 or 20 years of age, they would have reached the peak Pulse Condensation period, and their battle prowess would be worthy enough to face a Houtian master. To Qin Ziya, Lin Ming's strength seemed far off from such a level.

However, Qin Ziya didn't worry, Lin Ming still had time. In the future, his chances of winning first place would be gigantic.

Qin Ziya lightly coughed and slowly said, "The reason I called you here today is to discuss matters of the Total Faction Martial Meeting. As you have guessed, in just half a month's time, the Total Faction Martial Meeting will begin. The second-grade powers under the jurisdiction of the Seven Profound Valleys can send 5 people to participate."

In Sky Spill Continent, it wasn't just sects that were divided into

grades. Great martial families and countries were also divided into grades. The Seven Profound Valleys was a third-grade sect, and was also at the top of third-grade sects.

Sky Fortune Kingdom was a second-grade influence. The Zhao, Jiang, Liang, and Zhou families that lived at the edge of Sky Fortune Kingdom were all first-grade influences. For convenience in management, the Seven Profound Valleys put the first-grade influences into the second-grade countries. That was the reason why this week, the Liang, Jiang, Zhou, and Zhao families had sent their successors to come to Sky Fortune Kingdom's Seven Profound Martial House for training.

Qin Ziya continued to say, "You five disciples are the ones that my Sky Fortune Kingdom's Seven Profound Martial House have decided to send to the Total Faction Martial Meeting. There will be countless masters and geniuses at the Total Faction Martial Meeting. You may have been top-tier talents in Sky Fortune Kingdom, but placed in the Total Faction, you are just ordinary!"

Saying this, Qin Ziya caught a glimpse of a disapproving look from Liang Long. He frowned and icily said, "Liang Long, are you not convinced?"

Liang Long was startled. He quickly rose up and apologized, "I do not dare!" But thinking a bit, Liang Long whispered, "Martial House Master. Although I don't believe we can with the first place title, isn't it too much to say that we are 'ordinary'?"

Qin Ziya sternly said, "Ordinary is fine. Liang Long, what is your martial talent?"



“Inferior fifth-grade...” Liang Long said. In Sky Fortune Kingdom, this talent was pretty good.

“An inferior fifth-grade talent is splendid in Sky Fortune Kingdom, and you are also astonishing in your Liang Family. But, the Seven Profound Valleys has an accumulated inheritance of 600 years. When the great founders of the Seven Factions started, they had been constantly screening talents to be married. A fifth-grade talent is nothing at all! Even a janitor would need to be at least a superior fourth-grade talent. Not only that, the disciples of the Total Faction have family backgrounds and resources that are far superior to yours. Thus, their cultivation speed naturally exceeds yours. It is already good that you can catch up to the ‘ordinary’ level! Now sit back down!”

“Yes, Martial House Master.” Liang Long submissively sat down, feeling a bit battered. One would need to be a superior fourth-grade talent just to sweep the floor. That was to say, that even if he went to the Seven Profound Valleys, he would be no more than a disciple who swept the floor or cooked the food.

Lin Ming sighed in his heart sourly. Resources were simply too important to a martial artist’s cultivation. One needed cultivation methods, cultivation locations, pills, and so forth. It could be said that when the disciples of a large sect were first born, they had already arrived at a starting line that a common martial artist would never be able to reach in their entire life. They could be like Ouyang Dihua, who dawdled around doing nothing, and still reach the Houtian realm. But as for a common martial artist, it was difficult to even reach the Pulse Condensation period!

To a common martial artist, they would be ecstatic to even be able to enjoy one hour of the Seven Profound Martial House's seven major killing arrays. If they could use it as they wished, they would probably willingly shorten their lifespan by a dozen years.

But if the likes of this were placed in the Seven Profound Valleys, what use would it be? A core disciple probably would even disdain themselves to glance at it.

Qin Ziya continued to say, "This time, there will be the 36 countries under the rule of the Seven Profound Valleys, as well as 16 second-grade martial families. This amounts to a total of 52 different powers. With each side being able to send out 5 people, there should be 260 participants in total. But, because of the power of Huoluo Nation, Grace Venerate Nation, and some other great countries, they have an additional quota. So there will be 280 disciples altogether. In addition, the Seven Factions of the Seven Profound Valleys will send 240 of their own disciples. So all together, there will be 520 participants!

"In these 520 individuals, there will be at least 200 which will have reached the Pulse Condensation period! They might even be middle Pulse Condensation, late Pulse Condensation, or even peak Pulse Condensation! If you want to stand out in this group of 520 people, you can think on your own just how difficult this will be!"

## Chapter 233 – Earth-Step Treasure

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Liang Long thought that Lin Ming and Ling Sen were freakish enough. Even if they couldn't obtain first place, he assumed that it would still be a piece of cake for them to reach the top 20 or 30. For himself, making the top 100 was already a great honor he could return home with. But now it looked like out of all these hundreds of people, he was one of the worst.

If he ranked lower than 400 or 500, it would be a deep shame. How could he explain it once he returned home?

Liang Long hadn't even spoken again when the next words of Qin Ziya caused his heart to sink to the bottom of the ocean. Qin Ziya said, "The Total Faction's Martial Meeting will be held at the Seven Profound Valleys' Profound Sky Mountain Range. Before the Martial Meeting starts, there will be a checkpoint barrier; at least 60% of participants will be eliminated. Only those that pass through will have the qualifications to enter the Profound Sky Mountains."

"60%?" Liang Long's mouth fell open. Did that mean he wouldn't even have the chance to pass through the mountain gate?

If he went to the Total Faction Martial Meeting and couldn't even pass through the door, then that would be an absolute family shame that even his grandma would feel!

If this news spread throughout the family, then where would he have face to see anyone? Wouldn't he just become the family joke?

Liang Long was known as the future head of the Liang Family, there were many people who were jealous of his position. If he became a joke, then all sorts of baseless rumors would be spread!

As he turned around to look at Zhou Yu, he saw that Zhou Yu was also forcing a smile. Even Zhou Yu was worrying about whether or not he would pass through the gate.

The family head always said that there was a heaven above the heavens, and there were always people that stood above others. Now he finally understood that let alone him, there were even monsters that were stronger than Qin Xingxuan.

“Martial House Master, this...”

“What’s the matter?”

Liang Long wanted to say the he wished to abstain from the meeting. Since he couldn’t even pass through the gate, there was no point in going just to shame himself. But seeing Qin Ziya’s eyes sweep past him, Liang Long felt his mind numb and his body go cold. He could only gulp and change his words. “When do we leave?”

“We will go early tomorrow morning. You will go back and prepare. Tomorrow, we will take the Heavenly Wind Eagles to get there. Do you have any other questions?”

Lin Ming was silent for a moment, and then he said, “Martial

House Master Qin, I have a question.”

“Mm? Ask.”

“What is the prize?”

As soon as this question was asked, Liang Long and Zhou Yu both shrank their necks. They had both been worrying about how to pass through the mountain gate and not lose face after returning to their family in shame, but Lin Ming had actually opened his big mouth and asked what the prize would be. This was really the difference in their positions, their thoughts were just too different.

Qin Ziya gave Lin Ming an appreciative look and said, “The reward for first place is a Heaven Opening Pill! However, you won’t immediately receive this Heaven Opening Pill. First you must officially join the Seven Profound Valleys and then reach the peak Houtian realm. Afterwards it will be given to you. I won’t go into unnecessary details about how valuable the Heaven Opening Pill is.”

“Besides the Heaven Opening Pill, there are also some low-grade Earth-step treasures. There are offensive treasures and defensive treasures of all sorts. Second through fifth place will not receive a Heaven Opening Pill, but they will be rewarded with a low-grade Earth-step treasure. Sixth through tenth place will receive a Sky Spirit Pill, which is also a top-quality medicinal pill. As for eleventh through thirtieth place, they will receive a high-grade human-step treasure and an Earth Spirit Pill...”

Lin Ming's mind stirred as soon as he heard 'Earth-step treasure'. "They have many different types of treasure? Do they have a spear?"

Qin Ziya smiled and said, "Your weapon simply takes advantages of others. A spear's value is several times that of other weapons of the same step. Still, you can rest assured that the Seven Profound Valleys has been established for many years, and they have a deep heritage; naturally, they will have a spear!"

Earth-step treasure...

Lin Ming clenched his fists.

Qin Ziya saw Lin Ming's enthusiastic look and couldn't help musing to himself. This boy won't make first place. Although Lin Ming is strong, reaching first place is just too distant a goal. There are many middle Pulse Condensation, late Pulse Condensation, and even peak Pulse Condensation masters. How could a peak Bone Forging martial artist ever take first place?

What Qin Ziya didn't know was that ever since Lin Ming had met Mu Qianyu, in Lin Ming's eyes, these so called 'talents' of the Seven Profound Valleys weren't even worth mentioning.

Mu Qianyu reached Pulse Condensation at 15, Houtian at 17, Xiantian at 22, extreme Xiantian at 26, and now at 27 she was a half-step into the Revolving Dan realm.

At 22 years of age, talents of the Seven Profound Valleys were just beginning to attempt their breakthrough to the Houtian Realm, but Mu Qianyu had already stepped into the Xiantian realm!

This difference was simply like cloud and mud!

If he couldn't defeat these professed talent of the Seven Profound Valleys, then what was the point in reaching for the peak of martial arts?

.....

Seven hundred thousand miles away, Seven Profound Valleys.

The tens of thousands of miles of the Profound Sky Mountains were just like a towering black dragon. In the center of the Seven Profound territory of the Profound Sky Mountains was the Absolute Sword Peak. This mountain peak was 60,000 feet high and incredibly steep. The cliffs in all directions were almost vertical; it was as if the entire Absolute Sword Peak was made of 60,000 feet high sharp swords, piercing the heavens!

This Absolute Sword Peak was the center of the Seven Profound Valleys' Sword Faction. With the Absolute Sword Peak as the center, there were also 12 surrounding smaller peaks that circled around like a constellation.

In the thick high clouds there was a majestic and grand main hall. The outside of the main hall was layered with hundreds of

feet of blue stone tiles. In the middle of these tiles was a massive 200 foot sword that stabbed the ground.

Although this giant sword was just a carved statue, it was entirely made of darksteel and weighed hundreds of thousands of jins. If there really was a giant capable of pulling this sword up from the ground, it could truly be used for slaughtering one's enemies.

Under this great sword, the Sword Faction Sovereign stood there with his hands crossed behind his back. He was looking at an 18 or 19 year old youth in front of him. His eyebrows were slanted up like scimitars and his aura was impressive.

“During the last Martial Meeting, you were defeated by the Acacia Faction's Ouyang Ming. Now, after three years, Ouyang Ming has already reached the peak of Pulse Condensation. He will be your greatest opponent.”

The youth was silent for a moment, then he said, “Ouyang Ming is not my greatest opponent.”

“Mm? Then who will you take as your opponent?”

“My greatest opponent is only myself!” As the young man said this, his eyes shone with brilliance, “If during this Martial Meeting I can't even defeat the talents of a third-grade sect, what is the point of me thinking of climbing to the peak of swordsmanship?”

Though he and Lin Ming were separated by several hundred



thousand miles, words similar to those that were said by Lin Ming slowly came from this young man's lips.

“Haha! Well said! You are truly my son! Then during this Martial Meeting I will only have one expectation – you will win first place!”

“Yes, Father!”

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At the same time, just a hundred miles away at the main peak of the Acacia Faction, there was another young man around 20 years old that was looking down on the cloudy mountains, as if he was disdaining everything beneath him.

This young man was the one mentioned by the Sword Faction youth, Ouyang Ming.

“Ming'er, you are the most splendidly talented disciple that has come from the Acacia Faction in the last 100 years. This is the last Martial Meeting you can participate in before you are too old. I hope that you will be able to attain first place!”

“Yes, Mother.”

Behind Ouyang Ming was a beautiful woman. This elegant lady was none other than Ouyang Ming's mother. Although she was already over 50 years old, her appearance was no different to a young girl in her twenties.

“This time I am destined to be first place. I had actually hoped that Su Ran hadn’t surpassed the age limit; I was hoping to have a match against him. This is such a pity!”

The age limit for the Seven Profound Valleys’ Total Faction disciples to participate in the Martial Meeting was 20 years, two years less than the disciples from outside. This was the last time that Ouyang Ming would be able to participate in the Total Faction Martial Meeting.

“Achieving first place is good enough. As for the battle between you and Su Ran, you must win, otherwise it will frustrate your spirit.”

“I understand, Mother.”

“Also, do not lower your guard and underestimate others. The Zither Faction’s Qin Wuxin’s cultivation has reached the peak of Pulse Condensation. Although the Zither Faction doesn’t have many disciples, their skills and abilities are the most difficult to handle. There is also the Refiner Faction’s Han Yanluo. The Refiner Faction Sovereign has paid a great price in order to force a Flame Essence into Han Yanluo’s body using a special method. This man cannot be looked down upon!”

“I know, Mother.”

Although the Seven Factions of the Seven Profound Valleys were united together due to common interests, there was still infighting

among them. They constantly struggled for power, treasure, resources, talent, pills, manuals, and other things...

Sometimes there were conflicts that escalated to the point of fighting. In regards to this, even the Seven Profound Valleys' Valley Master couldn't do anything. If it wasn't for the fact that the Valley Master had excellent cultivation and also the backing of the Ancestor, then there would be no one that even cared about him.

The Seven Profound Valleys had many worries, and these things weren't necessarily unsolvable, they just had to be changed to a certain extent. For instance, the assignment of resources in the Seven Profound Valleys must have a method to distribute resources.

200 years ago, the old Valley Master decreed that every three years there would be a Total Faction Martial Meeting. The overall assignment of resources would be given out according to results of the disciples, then, nobody could oppose it.

Therefore the Seven Factions consumed a massive amount of resources and took great care in order to raise the ultimate direct disciple and use them to aim for the first place of the Total Faction Martial Meeting.

The direct disciple was chosen from the most talented individuals of the younger generation, and then unlimited resources were poured into them. The Sovereign would personally aid in their cultivation, and they would receive any sort of core cultivation method or ability they desired.

For the last 200 years, almost all of the first place titles of the Total Faction Martial Meeting were taken by a direct disciple of the Seven Factions. There were only a few exceptions, but those were also caused by other disciples of the Total Faction.

As for disciples outside of the Seven Profound Valleys, they had never achieved first place. Let alone first place, they hadn't even reached the top 10. To the disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys, those so-called talents that came from the 36 countries and second-grade martial families were nothing more than country bumpkins. At most they would be slightly stronger than a janitor who swept the floor.

The direct disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys had only ever considered each other as their opponents. They hadn't even deigned to consider the disciples that were from the outside.

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Sky Fortune Kingdom was 200,000 miles away from the Seven Profound Valleys' Total Faction. It would take over a dozen days to get there, even riding a Heavenly Wind Eagle.

Qin Ziya led a line of people to the Seven Profound Martial House's departure station. There were already a row of Heavenly Wind Eagles waiting there, and not only that, but they were of the finest quality. Their flying speed would be much quicker than an ordinary Heavenly Wind Eagle.

“Let’s go.”

As soon as Qin Ziya waved his hand, Lin Ming leapt onto a Heavenly Wind Eagle. With a keening screech, the Heavenly Wind Eagle shot into the sky, a billowing cloud of snow following in its wake.

The cold wind whistled in one’s ears. In a few breaths, the Heavenly Wind Eagles had already risen a thousand feet into the sky. If one leaned over to look, they could see the endless earth carpeted by a pure white blanket. This snowy-white extended all the way to the ends of the horizon. The touching scene gave birth to a desolate heroic feeling in one’s heart.

Because the Heavenly Wind Eagle was so fast, the snowflakes that struck the face were just like blades. Lin Ming put up a shield of true essence around himself, blocking the wind and snow.

The Heavenly Wind Eagle flew faster and faster, a clarion cry sounded out like a joyous song, echoing between the ends of heaven and earth...

# Chapter 234 – Profound Sky City

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The Seven Profound Valleys Total Faction was located within the Profound Sky Mountain Range. The Profound Sky Mountain Range didn't belong to any country; it had a very special status within the 36 countries in the Seven Profound territory.

The Profound Sky Mountain Range's tallest peak was 60,000 feet high. The mountain itself contained a massive amount of profound iron ore, so the entire mountain was a deep black iron color all over. The mountain had sparse vegetation, was rocky, and had extremely dangerous and steep cliffs. It was unknown why, but the entire mountain exuded a thick a baleful aura that caused those watching to feel unease. An average person climbing the mountain would feel very suppressed, and even if a martial artist were to pass by this place, they would attempt to take a winding detour around.

At the foot of the Profound Sky Mountain Range was a giant city. The walls of the city were 50 feet high and stretched for hundreds of miles.

This city was named Profound Sky City, and this was where the Total Faction Martial Meeting was held every three years.

There was a city-wide flying ban for hundreds of miles around Profound Sky City. Lin Ming saw this magnificent city rising from afar as a line of people swooped down from their Heavenly Wind Eagles and walked towards Profound Sky City on foot.

Along the way there were many fellow martial artists coming and going. Most of the martial artists' cultivations were at the Altering Muscle stage or above; with their movement abilities, they were able to cover the hundred miles in only a quarter of an hour.

Outside the city gate of Profound Sky City was a team of guards that kept watch. Seeing the cultivation of these guards, Lin Ming let out a breath, they were actually all Bone Forging martial artists. The captain of that group of guards was impressively at the peak of Bone Forging.

The Seven Profound Valleys was truly worthy of being called a large sect. If a peak Bone Forging martial artist went to the Sky Fortune Kingdom, they could become a well-known and respected commander in the army. But in the Seven Profound Valleys, these Bone Forging martial artists were only gate guards.

Many martial artists rushed to the Seven Profound Valleys because of their esteemed reputation. The Profound Sky Mountains contained an incomparably rich and thick heaven and earth origin energy. This was the reason the guards would rather live here. For instance, some people would rather live in the capital city and work hard labor as opposed to living in the countryside and finding a wife and having children. As long as they stayed in the capital city, they would have the hope of breaking through. But if they lived in a small country, then they might live their entire lives as a mere commander and never enter into the Pulse Condensation period.

The Profound Sky City's gate was gigantic, but there were too many people trying to enter the city, it seemed very crowded.

Particularly because the Total Faction Martial Meeting was occurring, there were many people that accompanied the core disciples.

To enter the city cost 10 gold taels. This high entry fee caused many of the low-level martial artists and common folk to shrink back, discouraged by the price.

Once Lin Ming paid the gold fee to enter the city, he discovered that over 90% of the residents of Profound Sky City were martial artists. Even the random peddler who hawked his wares on the street, or the waiters serving outside restaurants were martial artists. Although their cultivation was only at the first or second stage of Body Transformation, these people, if they went to Sky Fortune City, could live as a well-to-do servant or retainer in a respected family, while also having a high income and good reputation.

As the group walked by, Lin Ming saw all sorts of various treasures being sold. There was a pill shop and inscription symbol shops everywhere. If these shops were casually placed in Sky Fortune City, they would be on the scale of the Hundred Treasures Pavilions. What they sold would be considered incredibly valuable items that a common martial artist would never be able to afford even if they added up all of their savings.

All of this caused Lin Ming to sigh with emotion. If one lived at a different location, then their experience was also different. If he didn't reach his current strength, then he would never have come to Profound Sky City in his entire life and seen such scenes.



Zhou Yu and Liang Long also noticed these shops. They drooled over many of the items inside; there were many treasures that were difficult to purchase in Sky Fortune Kingdom, or might not even be sold.

Qin Ziya sensed what was on everyone's mind. He waited until they reached the inn, and then he told everyone, "You can go anywhere you want now. Come back to the inn before it's dark, and try not to cause a ruckus anywhere."

"Okay." Zhou Yu and Liang Long were very happy at this news. They left first together, there were many shops that they wanted to go check out.

Lin Ming had wanted to stay in the inn and calmly cultivate, but Qin Xingxuan suddenly tugged on his sleeve and said, "Lin Ming, don't you want to take a stroll around? This is my first time coming to Profound Sky City, I want to have a look around..."

This was considered an implicit invitation from Qin Xingxuan. Lin Ming naturally wouldn't decline such an invitation. He laughed and said with a smile, "This is also good. How about we go together?"

"Okay!" As soon as she heard this, Qin Xingxuan's features lit up with a smile; it was otherworldly and enchanting, the epitome of beauty and elegance.

After the two of them walked away, Sun Youdao sighed and said, "Ahh, it's nice to be young. Those two cute little kids are just a

match made in heaven. I really hope they end up together.”

Qin Ziya heard Sun Youdao's thoughts and only smiled, not saying anything. If these two were content with the current status quo, then ending up together would be very easy. But, if they both had the determination and resolve to pursue the peak of martial arts, then he was afraid that they would have to separate in the future.

.....

The two youths freely strolled around the city. Qin Xingxuan bought many things. She bought jewelery, some precious fabrics to weave into beautiful dresses, unique souvenirs, hand crafted items, and other little trinkets and things like this.

The merchandise of Profound Sky City was valuable, there were even some items that required true essence stones to buy. For instance, Qin Xingxuan bought a dress, but because there was Sky Worm Silk woven into the fabric, giving it protection against fire and water, the price was a true essence stone.

Luckily, Qin Xingxuan was the daughter of a rich family. If it were a normal martial artist, they would never be willing to buy a piece of clothing for 1000 gold taels. This was half the price of a treasure.

As they walked around, they suddenly saw a restaurant with a pleasant atmosphere. This restaurant was called Desert Flower Hall. There was a signboard in front of the restaurant that listed

out some signature dishes which caught Lin Ming's eye.

The recipes here actually contained the meat of fourth-level vicious beasts.

It had to be known that a fourth-level vicious beast was equal to a Houtian realm master. In the Sky Fortune Kingdom, this power was considered the pinnacle. Even if Lin Ming were to encounter a fourth-level vicious beast, he would usually run away.

A fourth-level vicious beast's body was simply a treasure. There were many parts that could be used to refine pills and elixirs. But placed here, it was actually food that was prepared in a restaurant. If this was so, then just how outrageously expensive would the food be?

"We've been in a hurry for the last few days, so all we've eaten is dry food and cured meats. Since we came here, let's take a look inside." Lin Ming said. Since he had grown up in a restaurant, he had special feelings towards them. Since he came to Profound Sky City, he definitely needed to sample the best restaurant here.

Qin Xingxuan read the signboard. She hesitated and said, "Here... is very expensive..."

If in the past Lin Ming had heard that Qin Xingxuan would feel timid about going into a restaurant due to price, then he would think it was simply a joke. But looking at this restaurant, it wouldn't be strange if the food it prepared with fourth-level vicious beasts cost around 20 or 30 pure true essence stones. 20 or

30 true essence stones was equal to 20 to 30 thousand gold taels. That was a price equivalent to a medium-grade human-step treasure; even Qin Xingxuan would feel a bit distressed by this cost.

After Lin Ming had looted Ouyang Dihua and Zhang Fengxian, he could be said to be filthy rich; he naturally didn't care about costs like this. He smiled and said, "During my adventure, I found a small treasure site and gained some true essence stones. Let me treat you."

"But....."

Before Qin Xingxuan could say any more, Lin Ming had already pulled her hand and entered into Desert Flower Hall.

When they found a tasteful corner of the restaurant to sit down in, the waiter took out two menus and handed them to them. Qin Xingxuan glanced over the prices and was secretly mind-boggled. Every dish on the menu was priced in true essence stones. The cheapest dish cost 2 true essence stones.

"If I eat the food here can I become immortal?" Qin Xingxuan excoriated in her heart. Coming here, she had brought 80,000 gold taels. This money was meant to buy pills and treasures. If she spend a quarter of it on food, then that would be hilarious.

"What are your specialties here?" Lin Ming asked after he glanced over the menu. If he was eating at a famous restaurant, then he naturally must eat the best and most well-known dishes.

The water's smiling face blossomed at hearing this. He said, "We have many specialties. For instance, we have keel soup made from the marrow of a fourth-level vicious beast with a Horned Dragon's bloodline, and also brewed with several dozen different sorts of precious herbs. The taste is mellow and the soup is smooth. After drinking, it can help consolidate true essence and positively affect the body. The keel soup is 25 true essence stones.

25 true essence stones? 25,000 gold? This was simply robbery!

Qin Xingxuan let out a breath. Although she didn't feel like it was worth the price, she didn't display any different expression in front of the waiter.

The waiter smiled and said, "Young master, young lady, I can see with just a glance that you are talented juniors of a large aristocratic martial family. If a martial artist cultivates every day, it is easy to overtax one's body. If one doesn't supplement their body with food, then later it will be very difficult to reach the Xiantian realm.

A mere waiter with a cultivation at the Third Stage of Body Transformation opened his mouth and spoke about breaking through to the Xiantian realm. This sort of vision could be considered pretty grand. Desert Flower Hall probably didn't often entertain many true Xiantian realm masters.

"Then I'll take a pot of the keel soup, and a few side dishes, two bowls of spirit valley rice, and a pot of green tea."

Even if Lin Ming was rich, he would only occasionally partake in such a luxurious feast. If he ate like this too often, even he wouldn't be able to afford it.

The dishes soon came. The keel soup was a lustrous pearl-white, and was as thick as milk. Just looking at it made one's appetite rise.

As Qin Xingxuan saw this keel soup arrive, she first served Lin Ming a big bowl, and then scooped one for herself. The creamy thick soup within the crystal jade bowl appeared just like a work of art.

Looking at this small bowl of soup, Qin Xingxuan self-deprecatingly said, "This small bowl is two or three true essence stones. It's enough for me to spend for half a month. I'll have to thoroughly taste it and see if it's any different."

Qin Xingxuan picked up the clear jade bowl and took a small sip. After feeling the soup slide past her lips, it quickly turned into a warm stream that flowed into her stomach. There seemed to be a faint trace of origin energy that flowed into her meridians, slowly and gently tempering the meridians within her body.

Although this origin energy was very weak, it was incomparably pure!

Pills had pill toxins. If one ate them, they could increase one's cultivation. But, it would cause their true essence to become

impure and they would need to expend energy in order to refine it out. But this keel soup, although it contained traces of origin energy, was very smooth and gentle. If one drank this long-term, it would consolidate one's true essence and give a miraculous strengthening effect on the meridians. And the best part was that there were no side effects.

Qin Xingxuan was shocked. There might not be any effect with just one or two bowls, but what if one were to drink it all the time, would it accumulate?

After she tasted the spirit valley rice, she found that it had equally good effects. Even the pot of green tea contained a rich wood-based origin energy, and was extremely refreshing. After drinking it, the soul force within her spiritual sea seemed to have been subtly supplemented.

“How is it?” Lin Ming asked Qin Xingxuan as he put down his chopsticks.

Qin Xingxuan's beautiful eyebrows furrowed for a bit as she pondered the aftertaste. She sighed and said, “No wonder their food is more expensive than our treasure. If you ate this every day then even without practice you could still break through to the Pulse Condensation period...”

## Chapter 235 – Conflict

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Lin Ming finished the keel soup and licked his lips. He said, “This is the heritage of a large sect. An ordinary martial artist can’t even think about things like this, much less eat it. When I went out adventuring, I ran into a senior. Every day, she would eat the rarest spirit fruits, and what she drank was the dew of a spring morning. She truly didn’t eat the smoke and fire of the mortal world and contaminate her body with the Houtian air.”

Qin Xingxuan scooped another bowl of soup for Lin Ming and asked, “If these delicacies were eaten every day, wouldn’t it be several dozens of true essence stones spent every day as well?”

Lin Ming said, “That’s right, but how many true essence stones do you think our Sky Fortune Kingdom’s true essence mines produce every year? 99% of that is sent to the Seven Profound Valleys. Besides us, there are also 35 countries whose resources, such as medicinal herbs, materials, precious ores, and other things, are shipped here every day. The direct disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys probably enjoy over a thousand true essence stones every month. Even if they eat food like this every day, it probably isn’t anything to them. They might even eat foods better than this.”

“The difference is just too big!” Qin Xingxuan sighed. In Sky Fortune Kingdom, she lived in the upper echelons of society. But once she arrived here, she actually had to be careful about every meal, for fear that she wouldn’t be able to afford it.

In Sky Fortune Kingdom, common martial artists had to risk



their lives in order to obtain a few normal medicinal herbs. And there were even more who couldn't afford the materials and money for medicine to practice martial arts, and thus, they had hidden internal injuries left over in their body. These martial artists would be disabled in their late forties. When Qin Xingxuan thought of this, she suddenly felt sad.

This was the disparity that a martial artist had to face from their very birth!

Many martial artists of Sky Fortune Kingdom wanted to reach the Pulse Condensation period, but even if they were diligent in cultivating their entire lives, it might not bear any fruit. But those that came from the Seven Profound Valley's Total Faction only needed to eat and sleep every day, and with just a bit of practice, they could break through to the Pulse Condensation period, or even reach the peak Houtian realm. If their parents were Valley Elders, they would be given focus and resources during training, and with a few Heaven Opening Pills, they could become a Xiantian master.

Thinking this, Qin Xingxuan quietly looked at Lin Ming. She suddenly thought, wasn't Lin Ming from an ordinary family? He had struggled so far to arrive where he was now. What price did he have to pay? What kind of danger did he have to face in order to obtain his lucky opportunities?

As she recalled Lin Ming's rare once in millennia perception and his ethereal martial intent, Qin Xingxuan felt some regret. If Lin Ming was born in a large sect, his results might even be better than they were now.

“What are you thinking of?” Lin Ming asked with a smile after he demolished the second bowl of soup. He found that Qin Xingxuan was quietly gazing at him, a thoughtful and deep look in her limpid eyes.

“Nothing much. I just think that this world is very unfair. An ordinary martial artist can diligently practice for a lifetime, and yet, they would never be able to touch a toe of these sect juniors.”

“Yes, life is unfair. But even so, you can either resign yourself to fate, or fight against the heavens. I heard in the legends that in the past, Emperor Shakyas also came from a humble background. He fused 7 different types of martial intent and broke through the martial void. It is harder for a common martial artist to succeed than to ascend to the heavens. But, if one truly does succeed, because they were tempered by their road of hardship and suffering, the path they walk down might even go farther than that of the disciples of a sect.”

Lin Ming was very calm as he spoke this. Qin Xingxuan suddenly felt that Lin Ming was talking about himself.

Qin Xingxuan was silent for a moment, and then, she turned her head to look out of the window. Her heartbeat quickened as a strange thought popped up in her mind, “Can I catch up with his shadow? In just half a year, I was overtaken by him. In the future... the gap between us will only grow...”

Thinking this, Qin Xingxuan felt something aching in her young

heart that she couldn't identify.

At this moment, several martial artists in bright clothing entered the Desert Flower Hall. The one leading them yelled, "Waiter! Come get us a table with some good dishes and two jars of Dragon Bone Wine!"

"Okay!" The waiter could instantly tell from the attitude of these people that they were wealthy patrons. He was all smiles as he walked over to greet them. The manner and aura with which this group of people ordered dishes was completely different than Lin Ming and Qin Xingxuan.

Desert Flower Hall was one of Profound Sky City's best restaurants, and it was also one of the places that was most frequented by young talents. Lin Ming saw the group place their equipment on the table, and all of them were high-grade human-step treasures. Obviously, they came from some extraordinary background.

"I've waited well enough for these last three years. I didn't have a chance to participate in the last Total Faction Martial Meeting, but now, I've finally struggled enough and they've given me a spot. If I can get a good ranking this time, father won't be able to say anything about it."

The young martial artist who said this was a half-step into the Pulse Condensation period. He looked about 18 years old. In another year or two, he would most likely break into the Pulse Condensation period. If he achieved the Pulse Condensation period at 19 or 20 years old, that result couldn't be matched by anyone in

the Sky Fortune Kingdom except by Lin Ming and Qin Xingxuan.

And listening to the way he spoke, not only was this youth's cultivation high, but his combat prowess was probably much higher than a normal martial artist. Otherwise, he wouldn't have the chance to participate in this Total Faction Martial Meeting.

“Haha, Brother Ouyang is too humble. During this Total Faction Martial Meeting, you will at least reach the top 100 rankings!”

“I'm just a bit too lacking. If I want to reach the top 100 rankings, I'll need to be at the Pulse Condensation period. If I try hard, I have hope that I'll be able to enter the top 150.”

“Brother Ouyang is too modest. Who doesn't know that Brother Ouyang's 'Divine Acacia Power' has already reached the fourth layer? There are many Pulse Condensation disciples that are still struggling at the third layer. In terms of combat power, Brother Ouyang's true strength is at least equal to the middle Pulse Condensation period. If compared with those countryside bumpkins from the 36 countries, even their peak Pulse Condensation martial artists wouldn't be Brother Ouyang's match!”

The young man named Ouyang drank a glass of wine and smiled. His name was Ouyang Ziyun, one of the Acacia Faction disciples that would participate in the Total Faction Martial Meeting. “Come on, don't compare me with those martial artists of the 36 countries, that's nothing more than an insult to me. You might as well compare me to the 16 martial cultivation martial families. At least those families have a legacy of a thousand years, and also

have some ability. They should have sent a few talented people to this year's Martial Meeting.”

“Are you saying that the Zhang Family's Zhang Yanzhao might reach the top 20? Although he may reach the top 20, he is still really inferior to the direct disciples of our Seven Profound Valleys. Let alone Brother Ouyang, even if it were us, if we went to the 36 countries and 16 martial families, we would sweep 99% of those so-called talents away.”

“Hahaha... “

As the laughter came over from the wine table, Qin Xingxuan had a very unpleasant and angry expression. She clenched her teeth and frowned as she said, “These people are simply too arrogant!”

“Strength determines status. It's normal for these Seven Profound Valleys disciples to look down on the 36 countries and the 16 martial families. But to speak so brashly and loudly, they really do not place others in their eyes. There aren't only the disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys that dine at this Desert Flower Hall.” As Lin Ming said this, he pointed over to a table. Qin Xingxuan followed his finger's direction and saw three young men and a young girl stand up from a nearby table. They had very black and somber expressions as they walked over to where the Seven Profound Valley disciples were sitting.

Ouyang Ziyun also noticed the four people walk over. These four individuals had a small golden dragon embroidered on the chest of their robes. Obviously, they came from the same family.

His eyes swept over them, taking note of their cultivation. The leader of the shabby little group was a youth who was at early Pulse Condensation. The other three were at the Bone Forging stage.

Even though he was at the Pulse Condensation period, the truth is that his meridians had just opened, and his foundation wasn't solid.

Seeing these people's cultivation, Ouyang Ziyun smiled. This kind of brash martial artist had just stepped into the Pulse Condensation period, and even though their strength hadn't increased by much, they still held a superior feeling towards anyone that was at the Bone Forging stage, thinking that they wouldn't be his match.

"This is nice too, today I will ruin your spirit, and let you know how big the gap is between you and the Total Faction disciples!" Thinking this, Ouyang Ziyun's smile widened even more.

"You said that you will sweep my 16 martial cultivation families away? Good. I, Long Yun, am standing here today. How about you try and sweep me away!" The leader of the group, who was a Pulse Condensation, coldly snorted. He looked around 20 years old, and most likely, he came here to participate in the Total Faction Martial Meeting.

"Long Yun? From Flower Spirit Mountain's Long Family? Humph, you think to speak up with that trivial family name?"

Ouyang Ziyun played with the wine in his hand, not even disdaining to stand up.

“Why don’t you see if we are your match!?” Hearing Ouyang Ziyun insult her family, the young girl behind Long Yun snapped. The treasure sword in her hand had already left its scabbard!

Ouyang Ziyun laughed. “This beautiful rose has some thorns. I have recently broken through to the fourth layer of the ‘Divine Acacia Power’, and was just looking for some talented women to cultivate with me. Your looks and cultivation are barely acceptable, are you interested?”

As Ouyang Ziyun said this, the Seven Profound Valleys martial artists who were sitting with him also laughed. The young girl from the Long Family ground her teeth together. Not only had she been sexually harassed, she had also been insulted. How could she not be angry?

“I’ll kill you!”

The young girl pulled her sword out to strike, but she was actually stopped by Long Yun. “Ninth Sister, you are not his match. Let me.”

Long Yun took a long spear out from his spatial ring and took a strange stance, “Surname Ouyang, today, I will experience your ‘Divine Acacia Power’. And I will have a look to see if you have the qualifications to spout such boastful crap!”

Seeing Long Yun's weapon, Lin Ming's eyes shone. This youth was actually a spear user, that was quite rare.

As the saying went: Sword like Jade, Saber like Tiger, Spear like Dragon. There were many martial artists, who after becoming famous, would use the name of their weapon or cultivation method to establish a martial family. For instance, the Seven Profound Valleys' Zither Faction's Founder took Qin as her surname, qin meaning zither. As for those that used the spear, they might create a family named long, which also meant dragon.

As the guests sitting nearby saw a fight about to break out, not only did they not panic, but they looked over with great interest. They drank their wine, ate their food, and looked forward to a spectacular performance.

The restaurant waiter didn't seem to be overly excited. He draped a towel off his back and began to put the wine away as he slowly said, "Several masters, if our store is damaged, then the items must be compensated. Would you prefer the winner to pay or the loser to pay?"

Hearing the waiter ask this, Lin Ming didn't know whether to laugh or cry. This really was a wonderful restaurant. But, this was quite normal. After all, those that came here were mostly proud and arrogant martial artists. Causing fights over disputes was probably a common matter.

"Naturally, the loser will pay." Ouyang Ziyun lazily rose from his seat, a playful smile tugging at his face. "Surname Long, let me warn you, any item at Desert Flower Hall is not cheap. If you want



to fight, having to pay one hundred true essence stones is already a low estimate. Don't think you don't have to pay if you lose! The boss of Desert Flower Hall is not some chump. If you're scared, there is still time for you to kneel right now and beg for forgiveness."

Hearing 100 true essence stones, Long Yun's face shifted between red and white. Eating here today had already left him bleeding in the heart. If he had to pay 100 true essence stones, he really wouldn't be able to afford it. But this time, he had no path left to retreat.

"You think that you've already won? What a joke! Take my spear!"

Long Yun gave a great shout and stepped forwards. True essence flooded out and gathered on Long Yun's spear, thrusting straight towards Ouyang Ziyun's chest like a black snake!

## Chapter 236 – Youthful Instincts

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“Humph! How overconfident. Don’t bite off more than you can chew!” Ouyang Ziyun flipped his wrist and a three foot long purple-red sword appeared in his hands. This was a high-grade human-step treasure.

True essence flooded the blade, and the purple-red sword began to turn the color of bleached bone. Ouyang Ziyun’s sword cut out, and noise of crying ghosts sounded out as his blade met Long Yun’s spear.

Peng!

As spear and sword crossed, a wave of true essence raged out, directly tossing aside several tables. Long Yun shuddered; he had felt a Yin cold drill into his body like a poisonous serpent. His right hand that held his spear instantly lost all feeling, as if it wasn’t his own.

Long Yun took a few steps, his face pale. Ouyang Ziyun was still quietly sitting there – not even the table behind him had been impacted in the least.

“Big Brother.”

“Senior-apprentice Brother.”

The two young men and the girl behind Long Yun hurried over to

support him. However, as soon as they touched Long Yun, they instantly felt a chilling cold and were frightened.

Lin Ming had been watching everything from the side. What Ouyang Ziyun had used was the Life Severing Dead Bone Blade. He had personally experienced this technique from the hands of Zhang Guanyu and Ouyang Dihua.

Ouyang Ziyun had a lower cultivation and his true essence was less thick than Ouyang Dihua's; but, in terms of controlling the strength of the Life Severing Dead Bone Blade, he was much more skillful than Ouyang Dihua.

“This Ouyang Ziyun, although his cultivation isn't at the Pulse Condensation Period, his 'Divine Acacia Power' is at a higher level than Ouyang Dihua's. He should be considered a genius who has his own pride.

Ouyang Ziyun laughed, “You can't even take my sword? Those that come out from the 16 martial families are nothing but waste!”

“I think that your 16 families and 36 countries should hold their own Martial Meeting, and not come to the Seven Profound Valleys' to embarrass yourselves. Otherwise, later you might not even be able to cross the mountain gate! You would all be a joke!”

“Haha, well said Brother Ouyang. This bunch of rat shits really ruin the soup pot. The Total Faction has raised their age limit to 22, and also lowered the threshold as far as possible. They have more than 200 people that come, and yet only little more than 70

can pass the mountain gate! With such a great effort, they came hundreds of thousands of miles here and still can't pass through the gate, isn't that just too funny?"

Listening to these unscrupulous people mocking him, Long Yun burned with anger. He gave a loud shout, and true essence surged within his body. His face turned a strange purple red, and a large crack appeared in the floor beneath his feet. Even the walls began to faintly tremble.

"Die!"

Long Yun's figure blurred, and he rushed like a phantom towards Ouyang Ziyun. With both hands on his spear, he smashed downwards. A shining bloody light burst out from Long Yun just like a rising red sun; apparently, this was his ultimate ability.

Ouyang Ziyun's eyes revealed an imposing color for the first time. He bit the top of his tongue and spat out a mouthful of blood that covered the blade of his sword. The cold and shining sword, after absorbing the blood, turned a dangerous blood-red.

"Soul Severing Blood Skull!"

Ouyang Ziyun gave a piercing roar as if his heart and lungs were being ripped out. A chilly wind blew through the entire restaurant, and vitality seemed to drain from the air. A red skull shot out from the blade of the sword, swiftly rushing towards Long Yun!

The skull opened its massive mouth. Long Yun shouted and thrust his spear directly into the bloody skull's jaws. True essence erupted outwards. However, afterwards the blood skull actually swallowed all of Long Yun's true essence and inflated like a balloon, then bit down on Long Yun's shoulder!

“Ah—!”

Long Yun miserably screamed. It felt as if all of the blood vitality throughout his body was being drawn out by this blood skill. His right arm that was bitten by the bloody skull began to visibly wither, and that bloody skull which was absorbing his blood essence grew more and more red as if it were dripping blood.

“Big Brother!”

“Senior-apprentice Brother!”

The girl that was with Long Yun cried out. Obviously, the feelings she had towards Long Yun were very deep. Their relationship probably wasn't as simple as apprentice brother and sister.

Ouyang Ziyun saw the girl's reaction and a deviant light shined in his eyes. He wiped his mouth of blood, true essence restlessly roiling in his body. He paid a large price to use the Soul Severing Blood Skill. Without several days of time, he wouldn't be restored to his peak condition.

At this time, Long Yun had been completely swallowed by that bloody skull. His body was suspended in midair, as if he were wrapped in a giant bloody bubble. He had lost all his color, his eyes shrank, and almost seemed dead.

Although it looked horrifying, the truth was that Ouyang Ziyun had never dared to kill since the start. The Total Faction Martial Meeting would begin soon, and if he killed a contestant in front of so many people, it would be very bad. Even if he had a backer in the Seven Profound Valleys he wouldn't dare to do so.

The young girl wished she could tear Ouyang Ziyun to shreds. But, she was just able to maintain her reasoning. She was no match for Long Yun, and the gap between her and Ouyang Ziyun was even greater. "Let go of my Senior-apprentice Brother!"

Ouyang Ziyun lewdly grinned at the young girl and said, "You want me to let go of your Senior-apprentice Brother? Hehe, why would I do anything so cheaply? I lost a great deal of my blood and vitality in order to use the Soul Severing Blood Skull; I won't be able to fully recover for several days. Since the Martial Meeting is about to begin, this won't just be a small loss for me."

The young girl trembled with rage, her chest heaving up and down. She hatefully said, "What do you want?"

Ouyang Ziyun's eyes lasciviously swept over the young girl's milk-white breasts. He vulgarly smiled and said, "It's simple. Double cultivate with me for three days so I can recover my vitality. Don't worry, double cultivating also has advantages for you..."

“You... you...” The young girl could hardly believe her own ears. This Ouyang Ziyun was actually shameless to such a degree!

“Ninth Younger Sister, don’t speak nonsense with such an animal. Let’s go and kill him together!” The two young boys behind the young girl were ignited with rage. They pulled out long spears from their spatial rings.

“Right, let’s go together!”

They couldn’t endure this rage any longer. True essence erupted from their bodies. Their cultivation methods were identical; obviously, their cultivation stemmed from the same heritage of the Long Family.

Ouyang Ziyun coldly snorted, “You are not my match!”

“Hey, we’ll come play with you for a bit.” The silk-robed disciples behind Ouyang Ziyun stood up, smiling. They were at the peak of Bone Forging, and since Long Yun was defeated, they were more than enough to deal with these three remaining.

Suddenly, the imposing momentum of both sides burst out, but, the Long Family was obviously the weaker side. The young girl’s eyes flashed with loathing, but her face was extremely pale. She knew that if they fought, her side would absolutely lose.

At this time, the three of them suddenly heard a sizzling sound

overhead. A purple electric snake drilled into the skull, took a circle around, and then with a ‘peng!’ sound, the bloody skull exploded into a crimson fog. Long Yun fell down from the air, unconscious.

“Senior-apprentice Brother!”

“Big Brother!”

The young girl and the two young boys ran over to catch Long Yun. Seeing Long Yun’s pale face, the young girl’s heart ached and her lips trembled, it felt as if a blade had been thrust into her heart.

“Who!?”

The Soul Severing Blood Skull was connected to the blood and vitality of Ouyang Ziyun. Since it was suddenly broken, the blood within his body began to surge restlessly, and he almost spat out a mouthful.

Ouyang Ziyun angrily glared at Lin Ming and Qin Xingxuan. Because they had been sitting in a remote corner, he hadn’t really taken notice of them.

“Who are you? Which family are you from?” Looking at Lin Ming and Qin Xingxuan’s clothing, they were obviously not from the Seven Profound Valleys. That was why he asked this question.



“We aren’t from a family. We are from Sky Fortune Kingdom.” Qin Xingxuan said as she sent a loathing look towards Ouyang Ziyun. Towards the disciples of the Acacia Faction who used their strength to bully men and take women, she found them incomparably disgusting.

The Seven Profound Valleys was a paradox with both good and evil. Because of the difference in the Seven Factions’ cultivation methods, their personalities also varied greatly. As the saying went, those who walked different paths cannot make plans together. There wasn’t much love lost between the Seven Great Elders of the Seven Factions. Not even the Seven Profound Valleys’ Valley Master could change this.

In the Seven Profound Valleys, the Acacia Faction was infamous for being absolutely wicked. This was because of their cultivation method, because their sect required one to travel around and plunder women to use as cultivation furnaces. Otherwise, they would not be able to advance in their cultivation method. Not only that, but because the disciples of the Acacia Faction had intense desires, this often resulted in them bullying men and taking their women.

As for these matters, the Great Elder of the Acacia Faction had adopted a manner in which he tacitly consented to this as long as they didn’t provoke a deadly calamity. As for the Seven Profound Valleys’ Valley Master, even if he wanted to do something, he could not control this.

“Sky Fortune Kingdom? Haha, so it is Sky Fortune Kingdom. In the 36 countries, Sky Fortune Kingdom is only ranked in the

middle. You are even worse than the 16 martial families!” Although Ouyang Ziyun was insolently smiling, he was vigilant in his heart. Since when did Sky Fortune Kingdom have a talented martial artist of the thunder-attribute? A thunder-attribute martial artist had a restraining effect towards ghosts and phantoms; they were the most difficult to deal with.

The few people behind Ouyang Ziyun didn’t know that he had already taken a disadvantage. Hearing that the two came from Sky Fortune Kingdom, they laughed, “Brother Ouyang, there is no need for you to take action, we are enough to handle them. These two country bumpkin martial artists came from Sky Fortune Kingdom with only a trivial Bone Forging cultivation and yet dare to act so rampantly. Speaking of which, that little girl’s skin looks quite good. Ah, brothers, let’s help take her so Brother Ouyang can cultivate the Perfect level of the Divine Acacia Power’s fourth layer!”

Hearing them have such dastardly ideas towards her, Qin Xingxuan became short of breath. She clenched her teeth and took out a longsword from her spatial ring.

But at this moment, Lin Ming held down Qin Xingxuan’s sword and said, “Let me handle this.”

As she relaxed her sword hand, Qin Xingxuan nipped her lip and said, “I can deal with those underlings, but I’m not confident against that Ouyang boy. Still, I will have no problems protecting myself.

Hearing Qin Xingxuan’s words, Lin Ming was a bit surprised.

Ouyang Ziyun had the strength of an ordinary middle Pulse Condensation martial artist. If Qin Xingxuan was able to protect herself from him, that meant that she had the power of a peak early Pulse Condensation martial artist. Her progress was just too quick – sixth-grade talents were just too abnormal.

He still pressed down Qin Xingxuan's sword and confidently smiled at her, "Don't worry, I'll fight this time."

Lin Ming said he would fight, but that didn't mean he would resort to violence. For him, this was just a spur of the moment fight due to circumstances. There was no need to be violent.

The playboy disciples of Sky Fortune City, especially those juniors of large martial families, would frequently come to blows in restaurants or brothels because of misspoken words or because of love for women. These actions may seem as if they came from were brainless and arrogant fools, but what young hot-blooded youth had never been driven by their natural impulses and obsessions towards beautiful women, and acted completely out of sorts?

Although Lin Ming didn't agree with this approach, he had to admit that he once envied the pleasurable and arrogant life of these playboys. However at the time, he had limited strength and no background to speak of. Usually every day he would be in the back mountains, practicing his martial arts day in and day out like endless torture. That sort of life left him completely insulated from this, but also isolated.

His youthful instincts had been suppressed for so many years,

and now, he finally had an opportunity to fight for a woman he liked.

He wanted to fight for Qin Xingxuan.

## Chapter 237 – Soul Force Genius

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Lin Ming stood in front of Qin Xingxuan, then slowly placed down the bowl in his hand. “I just heard a moment ago that you want to sweep away the 36 countries. I’m looking forward to that very much. Since I’m standing right here, why don’t you try sweeping me away.”

“Haha, this silly boy actually thinks he’s something. Brothers, let’s fulfill his wish and sweep away this stupid boy just like garbage.” The one speaking was a black-clothed martial artist. He didn’t think he could win by himself, but with everyone together, he didn’t believe that they wouldn’t be able to handle such a kid.

With the shout from the black-clothed man, the four men rushed out together. Lin Ming stood still where he was. Not only did he not dodge, but he had even closed his eyes.

The black-clothed martial artist didn’t know just what Lin Ming was trying to do, but seeing his sword about to fall onto Lin Ming’s face, the corners of his lips curved up in a devilish smirk. ‘Today I will make you suffer!’

As their attacks were about to come down, Lin Ming suddenly opened his eyes, his vision sweeping out.

The black vortex bloomed like a beautiful obsidian lotus, devouring everything in its wake. The Samsara martial intent erupted outwards, and at this time, countless illusions poured into the four martial artists’ minds. Their bodies instantly shook, as

monstrously turbulent waves shook their spiritual sea, their consciousness becoming a complete mess. Their hands no longer moved. Instead, the martial artists' eyes became glazed over with a dark glimmering light, their pupils losing focus.

Plop plop plop plop!

The four martial artists fell to the ground like a bunch of dead dogs, foaming at the mouth. Their bodies were trembling as if they had an epileptic seizure.

Ouyang Ziyun was looking at them confusedly. They had all been taken down with a single glance? What had he done?

Ouyang Ziyun subconsciously tightened the grip on his sword as he looked at Lin Ming with a slight tinge of fear creeping into his eyes.

Those in the hall who had been enjoying the fight also instantly noticed Lin Ming. Just where had this boy come from? Although those four martial artists' strength weren't that much, they were still peak Bone Forging martial artists; why did they inexplicably all fall to the ground?

"Things have gotten a bit interesting." A youth with an early Pulse Condensation cultivation commented as he leisurely sipped his wine. His eyes were filled with curiosity as he looked at Lin Ming. It was simply inconceivable for someone with this strength to come from the 36 countries.

Against these four martial artists, Lin Ming had already stayed his hand. He certainly couldn't turn them into idiots. But this was also good enough. Their spirituals seas had been injured and they would take at least a few weeks – if not a month – to recover.

Ouyang Ziyun's complexion was very ugly, as if he had just kicked an iron door. But, he couldn't back down. There were many people watching him in the Desert Flower Hall, who knew how many of them were disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys? If he chickened out today, then these people would definitely publicize how he was like a turtle once they returned to their respective factions. In the Seven Factions, every disciple competed against each other. The Acacia Faction tacitly allowed its disciples to act in a domineering and arrogant manner wherever they went. So if one were to be a coward, that would truly be a great disgrace.

Ouyang Ziyun braced himself and said, "Boy, don't play such petty tricks in front of me! What you used just now was a soul attack? If you were skilled in this method of attack and the difference in strength isn't too great, then you could instantly dispatch someone, But, if you run into someone stronger than yourself, then your ability is worth nothing. In fact, your powers will only backfire on yourself. None of this represents how strong you are."

After all, Ouyang Ziyun originated from a large sect, and he had a respectable amount of knowledge. In just a few words he was able to luckily guess about Lin Ming's Samsara martial intent, however, the Samsara martial intent's effects were much more formidable than Ouyang Ziyun had imagined, it was only that Lin Ming hadn't yet been able to fully develop them.

“If you can take my strike, then I sincerely admit defeat.”

As Ouyang Ziyun said this, his entire body ignited with a queer purple fire that burned all around him. What was strange about this was not that the fire wasn't hot, but that it caused a bone chilling breeze to blow through the room. After this cold wind touched the table and floor behind him, a layer of purple ice congealed over them. After a period of time, the furniture that was wrapped in this purple ice turned into ashes, as if the ice had a hot fire wrapped within.

This was the technique that Ouyang Ziyun had comprehended after reaching the fourth layer of the 'Divine Acacia Power' – Purple Flame Bone Lance. To use it required an extreme consumption of true essence. He had originally planned to use it as his final move within the Total Faction Martial Meeting, but at this moment, he had no choice but to bring it out.

Lin Ming stood still and crossed his arms against his backs. Against someone like Ouyang Ziyun, there was no point in making a move.

In a few breaths of time, the brilliantly shining purple flames began to condense into a purple lance within Ouyang Ziyun's right hand. The sounds of crying ghosts began to emanate outwards from the lance.

Ouyang Ziyun's face became incomparably pale and wan. All of the skills within the 'Divine Acacia Power' were the extreme Yin and extreme cold. Using any move required a massive consumption of essence and blood, which was why they would



take a woman's Yin energy in order to recover their own.

For Ouyang Ziyun to produce this purple bone lance was already his limit. He was just like a skinny old man who was trying to wield a heavy several-dozen jin sledgehammer; he was barely able to control it.

“Die!” Ouyang Ziyun barely managed to spit out this word. The endless purple flames on the purple bone lance in his hand were wavering; it would be very difficult to throw it at this time.

Lin Ming shook his head and said, “Are you done yet? I’ve been waiting for you so long that my food is getting cold. Do you think you could actually kill someone using a move like this? You would already have long been done in by your enemy.”

“You...!” Ouyang Ziyun was provoked by Lin Ming’s mocking words and almost lost control of the bone spear within his hand. This move wasn’t ready to use in actual combat yet, because Ouyang Ziyun had just broken through to the fourth layer of the ‘Divine Acacia Power’, and it was difficult for him to control the Purple Flame Bone Lance. If an old man used a sledgehammer to fight his enemy, it would take him a while to pick it up. Not only that, but he would most likely miss, and if things went badly, he might even twist his waist and smash his own foot.

The reason that Ouyang Ziyun used this move against Lin Ming was because he was depending on Lin Ming’s conceited attitude to directly take his move. Like this, he would have a chance against Lin Ming.

“You... don’t dare to take my move!?” Ouyang Ziyun tried to goad Lin Ming, barely managing to squeeze these words through his clenched teeth. His face was becoming increasingly pale, and even speaking was becoming difficult.

Lin Ming laughed as if he had heard the funniest joke. “Why would I want to take your move?”

Lin Ming’s voice had just fallen when a black light flashed in his eyes. A shadowy vortex appeared in his eyes, silently enveloping Ouyang Ziyun and swallowing him whole.

Bang!

Ouyang Ziyun felt as if an explosion instantly occurred within his head. Countless images and phantoms sunk into his spiritual sea. He had already been approaching the limit of his strength, so he didn’t even have the strength to resist. His body didn’t tremble, he only directly collapsed to the floor. But, the Purple Flame Bone Lance in his hand had lost Ouyang Ziyun’s soul force control, and dissipated.

The bone lance turned into a cloud of chilling purple fire that scattered in all directions.

If these chilling flames shot out, they would be able to wipe out the entire restaurant. As for Ouyang Ziyun who had lost consciousness, he would meet with a great disaster.

But at this moment, a black-clothed man flew down from the second floor and waved his hand. A powerful whirlwind appeared in the air and sucked all the purple flames into his hand, condensing into a dark purple orb. The black-clothed man casually flung his hand and the dark purple orb shot out of like an arrow, shattered the window, and continued flying into the horizon before it finally disappeared out of everyone's vision.

Lin Ming had already discovered this black-clothed man at this start of the conflict when he had appeared on the second floor. Lin Ming guessed he was a master that worked for the Desert Flower Hall. This restaurant was so big and was located in such a sensitive location, how could it not have a master here sitting guard?

The audience hadn't even expected such a result. They had been waiting to see how Lin Ming would deal with the Purple Flame Bone Lance; no one knew he had discovered the black-clothed man. Once Ouyang Ziyun had lost control of the bone lance, if it wasn't for the black-clothed man saving the day, Ouyang Ziyun would have been burned black by his own purple flames.

The black-clothed man furrowed his eyebrows as he looked at Lin Ming. This man's cultivation was at the peak Houtian realm, he wasn't much worse than Qin Ziya.

"Boy, you are quite cruel. If I hadn't taken action in time, then you would never have left Desert Flower Hall today.

Lin Ming apologetically smiled and said, "Senior had long since

been ready to take action. There was no way Senior would let an important disciple of the Acacia Faction die in Desert Flower Hall, otherwise Desert Flower Hall's troubles would be no less than mine."

The black-clothed man stiffened, unable to think of anything that could refute Lin Ming's claim. He only coldly grunted to express his dissatisfaction. This young boy was simply mad – how could he be certain that he would take action? He didn't believe that Lin Ming knew he would come out once the purple flames began to overflow in order to salvage the situation.

"If this kid can find me, he has some ability. His soul force must be incomparably powerful. He might be born with a superior fifth-grade soul talent, or even an inferior sixth-grade." The black-clothed man's cultivation was at the peak Houtian realm. Although he hadn't reached the realm of returning to his origin, he still knew some ways to hide himself. He had been restraining his breath a moment ago in order to not be discovered by Lin Ming.

That black-clothed man sent a long look towards Lin Ming before turning to leave.

At this time, the companions of Ouyang Ziyun had already begun to wake up. They saw Ouyang Ziyun lying like a dead dog on the floor, and they shrunk back. Suppressing their headaches, they picked up Ouyang Ziyun and hastily left, not daring to look Lin Ming in the eyes.

The surrounding martial artists had all turned their gazes on Lin Ming, their expressions differing.

“A martial artist who is skilled in soul force is quite rare. I never thought that the 36 countries could produce one with passable talent.”

The martial artist who spoke was at the Pulse Condensation period and had some pride in his knowledge. The soul attack that was used on Ouyang Ziyun could instantly take out a lesser opponent, but against someone with surpassing strength, rashly using an ability like that would only cause a backlash.

“Don’t look down on him. He was able to bring down four peak Bone Forging martial artists at the same time. The power of his soul force is simply amazing, he might have a sixth-grade soul talent. I think that even an early Pulse Condensation martial artist might not be his match.”

“Mm. But like this, the most he can reach is the top 150 rankings. And before that, they are mostly early Pulse Condensation period martial artists, and they are also talented martial artists whose strength surpasses their cultivation.”

The martial artists at Desert Flower Hall were discussing this situation with true essence sound transmission. Some of them had already begun jotting down Lin Ming’s appearance and preparing to notify their family or sect.

At this time, in a private room on the second floor of Desert Flower Hall, a black-clothed man was calmly drinking a cup of wine. There was no expression on his face, as if the fierce

commotion that occurred downstairs a moment ago was completely separate from him.

“This boy is a bit interesting.”

In front of the black-clothed man was a purple-clothed man, whose cultivation was at the middle Pulse Condensation period. He carried a four foot long sword on his back. There were many swordsmen who even if they had a spatial ring, would prefer to carry their sword on their back in order to increase the connection between themselves and their swords.

## Chapter 238 – Jiang Lanjian

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“That kid may be considered invincible underneath the Pulse Condensation period, but once he meets a true Pulse Condensation talent, anything he does will be useless.” The black-clothed martial artist casually said. His name was Jiang Lanjian, and he was a direct descendent of the Sword Faction Founder Jiang Yu. In addition, he was also the second genius direct disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys’ Sword Faction, just underneath Jiang Baoyun.

Jiang Lanjian’s cultivation was already at the peak Pulse Condensation period. With such strength, he was considered among the best disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys.

“My sword wind has already reached the higher echelons; there is nothing that I cannot cut to nihility. Whether it is obsession, life, heart demons, which also includes soul attacks, or even the power of thunder, there is nothing my sword cannot pierce. Even if that boy was at the same cultivation level as me, he still wouldn’t be my match!

“After all, soul attacks simply aren’t the correct path. At first you will have wonderful results and your strength will rapidly grow, but once you reach a higher realm, they simply become weak. If you put in too much effort, it will instead be a limiter placed on your future strength and potential.”

Jiang Lanjian calmly commented as he quietly drank his wine, pointing out the details to the purple-clothed person. The purple-clothed person laughed. He knew that Jiang Lanjian had an extremely broad vision of the world, and there was nothing wrong

with his review of abilities, styles, cultivations and so on. Even the Sword Faction Sovereign praised his judgement.

“How can the disciples of the 36 countries possibly compare with you? Even if they advance to the top 100, that can already be considered their greatest glory. If they luck their way into the top 50, that can be considered the highest praise to their ancestors. As for soul attacks, they certainly aren’t the proper path, but it is still better than those unorthodox methods.”

Jiang Lanjian no longer spoke. Towards the 36 countries, if they had a decent ability, it was better than nothing – even if it didn’t follow the proper path.

“Let’s go, the Acacia Faction hates being shown up the most. Now that Ouyang Ziyun has suffered so much this time, his big brother Ouyang Zifeng will surely take revenge for him. This young boy has gotten himself into no small amount of trouble.”

.....

While Lin Ming was fighting Ouyang Ziyun, Long Yun had already drank up some Bloodstone Milk to recover his blood vitality. He had recovered just in time to see Lin Ming defeating Ouyang Ziyun.

After finding out that Lin Ming came from Sky Fortune Kingdom, Long Yun was filled with emotion. The 16 martial cultivation families had also had a certain conceit and arrogance, because they had abundant resources and their own independent



heritage. As for Long Yun, he was an outstanding genius of the Long Family, yet today, he had actually fallen far behind a young talent from the Sky Fortune Kingdom. Not only that, but what Long Yun was most unable to accept was that Lin Ming's cultivation was lower than his.

“Thank you. I am Long Yun, a disciple of the 31st generation of the Long Family.” Long Yun stepped forwards, cupping his fists together in thanks.

The ancient martial cultivation families would often introduce themselves by stating which generation they stemmed from. This was also a way for these martial families to show off their heritage. For many martial artists, in order to not delay their cultivation, they would marry and have children at 30 or 40 years of age. If a family could have 31 generations of disciples, that meant they had to at least have a millennium of history.

“I am Lin Ming from Sky Fortune Kingdom.” Lin Ming politely stated his own name, then went to sit back in his own seat. Qin Xingxuan was waiting there and kindly handed Lin Ming a big bowl of keel soup. To her, Lin Ming's victory was a natural matter. Not counting Lin Ming, even Ling Sen would have easily defeated that Ouyang Ziyun.

Long Yun also noticed that Qin Xingxuan was at the middle Bone Forging stage. This cultivation – in contrast with her young and incomparably beautiful appearance – immediately took him by surprise.

This young girl was obviously 15 or 16 years old, and yet she had

such a high cultivation. Did she also have a high talent?

If she didn't have some fortuitous encounter, then she was probably a sixth-grade martial talent.

Was she also from the Sky Fortune Kingdom? When did the Sky Fortune kingdom have so many talents?

The several people behind Long Yun also noticed Qin Xingxuan. For the past few months that Lin Ming had wandered in the Southern Wilderness, he had already grown up. His skin had tanned, his features became sharper, and his presence contained a dark edge. It wouldn't be too much even if someone thought he was 17 years old. But as for Qin Xingxuan, she had a very sweet and young appearance. When they were the same age as Qin Xingxuan, their cultivations were only at the Altering Muscle stage.

Especially the young girl behind Long Yun. After she saw Qin Xingxuan, a deep feeling of inferiority and unworthiness emerged in her heart. After all, when two girls met, they compared not just their strength and talent, but even their looks.

Having lost in every aspect, the young girl could only give a heavy sigh. If she knew earlier, then she wouldn't have come.

Long Yun hid his shock and sent a friendly smile towards Qin Xingxuan. Perhaps in five years, this young girl would become infamous throughout all 36 countries.

Seeing Long Yun smile at her, Qin Xingxuan only politely nodded her head.

Since Long Yun had no intention of staying, he quickly bid farewell.

“Brother Lin, if you go to Huoluo Nation, you can come visit my Long Family. My Long Family lives at the edge of Huoluo Nation, at Flower Spirit Mountain. Well then, goodbye.”

“Farewell.”

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Several hours later, Seven Profound Valleys Acacia Faction –

The mountain peak where the Acacia Faction was stationed was lush with perennial flowers and plants, as if it were a glorious spring morning. This was because the founder of the Acacia Faction, Ouyang Xun, had paid a steep price in order to set up a massive array formation at the peak of the Acacia Faction and prevent the cold mountain air from entering. Because of this, the entire mountain peak was green all year round.

Of course, because of this array formation, over 10,000 pure true essence stones were consumed every year. In a small country, this amount would already have been enough to bankrupt a great family.

As one walked up to the peak of the Acacia Faction, not only did they see gorgeous flowers, but there were also superb and exquisite women roaming around. This sight was simply beautiful to behold.

The faction within the Seven Profound Valleys with the most women was not the Zither Faction, who primarily took in female disciples, but the Acacia Faction.

For every male disciple of the Acacia Faction, there would be three or four female companions.

Some of these women were coerced, but most of them had voluntarily come. The cultivation method of the Acacia Faction had a greater benefit for the men, but if applied properly, would also benefit the women. Because of this, there were some fourth-grade talents who hadn't been able to join the Seven Profound Valleys as disciples, who would rather enter the Acacia Faction and cultivate the 'Divine Acacia Power'. With the assistance of the Acacia Faction, they hoped they would step into the Pulse Condensation period, or even the Houtian realm, before their looks began to wither from age.

If they could do this, they would have dozens of extra years of life, and they would be able to remain at the most beautiful point of their lives. To those beautiful women, this was a fatal temptation. Among them there were even many women who came from distinguished families of the 36 countries; their statuses weren't much different compared to Bai Jingyun or Murong Zi's positions in Sky Fortune Kingdom. If Bai Jingyun hadn't preferred to die rather than join Ouyang Dihua, she would have entered here and also have become a companion in these halls.

At a gathering in the mountains, there was a group of female cultivators that had come together. They were celebrating the fact that they had just stepped into the Pulse Condensation period and attained several dozen years of youth. Most of them were in their mid-twenties; this was the time in a woman's life when they were at their most mesmerizing and enchanting. Because they had good maintenance of their looks, and took a variety of pills, their skin was tender and moist like water. They looked no different from a young girl in her teens.

But as they were celebrating, they were surprised to see several Acacia Faction disciples hurriedly carrying someone up the mountain. This person was pale and his whole body was twitching, just as if he were an epileptic.

“That twitching person is probably... is that Ouyang Ziyun?” A woman recognized Ouyang Ziyun. There were a handful of promising future disciples that the female cultivators gave special attention towards. After all, if they cultivated with these geniuses, they would obtain more resources. If they took care of them, they might even obtain miracle medicines that would help them break through to the Pulse Condensation period. To these women, pill toxins were something that never entered their thoughts. As long as they entered the Pulse Condensation period, they had no problem, even if their combat prowess was horrible.

“It's really Ouyang Ziyun. Heavens, how did he come to look like that?” Another woman covered up her mouth. Recently things seemed to have been occurring at the Acacia Faction. Just a while ago an Elder's nephew, Ouyang Dihua, had been killed. And now, Ouyang Ziyun had become like this.

As they spoke, a middle-aged man and a youth came soaring down from the mountain. Apparently they had received a message in advance and had come down to receive them.

As soon as the middle-aged man saw Ouyang Ziyun's pitiful appearance, his soul force swept out and he immediately understood his condition. After he reluctantly summoned the Purple Flame Bone Lance, he was attacked. The following backlash from the attack had turned him into this. It would take him at least half a month to recover.

Like this, he could not participate in the Total Faction Martial Meeting. This would be a large blow to Ouyang Ziyun. The middle-aged man frowned and asked, "What happened?"

This middle-aged man was Ouyang Ziyun's father, Ouyang Wenzong. He was a Xiantian elder of the Acacia Faction. In the Acacia Faction, around 70% of the elders had the surname of Ouyang. This was because they were the descendants of the Acacia Faction Founder, Ouyang Xun. As they had a solid foundation already established, they were able to obtain more resources. Also, because their inherited talent was better than other disciples, the chances of them breaking into the Xiantian realm were quite high.

The several low-level Acacia Faction disciples were compelled by Ouyang Wenzong's forceful aura, and immediately felt a heavy sense of pressure. They didn't dare to say anything false, and reported what had happened with quivering lips.

As the middle-aged man heard the several people tell their story, his eyes flashed. “An expert soul attack user, but also has some ability to control thunder. He is able to instantly defeat any martial artist at his cultivation, and is invincible under the Pulse Condensation period?”

The three Acacia Faction disciples were only trying to shift the blame onto someone else, thus they had branded Lin Ming as brilliant and mysterious, giving him the title of ‘invincible under the Pulse Condensation period’. In their opinion, Ouyang Ziyun was already someone with only a rare rival underneath the Pulse Condensation period. If Lin Ming could defeat Ouyang Ziyun in an instant, then saying invincible underneath the Pulse Condensation period wasn’t an exaggeration.

“Humph. This world is so big, and yet he dares to call himself invincible underneath the Pulse Condensation period?” The youth snorted, obviously thinking otherwise. This youth was Ouyang Ziyun’s older brother, Ouyang Zifeng, and his cultivation was at the late Pulse Condensation period.

“Those martial artists that can use soul attacks are completely worthless against martial artists that are stronger. I will defeat him on the Martial Meeting stage, and make him pay a great price for what he’s done.”

“Mm. But only as far as the rules allow, don’t try to be provocative.” Ouyang Wenzong also wanted to have Ouyang Zifeng give some payback for his youngest son, otherwise it would frustrate Ouyang Ziyun’s heart and affect his future cultivation.

“Father, don’t worry. I understand.”

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On the fifth day since Qin Ziya and his team arrived at Profound Sky City, the Total Faction Martial Meeting began. The 520 disciples of the 36 countries within the Seven Profound territory, the 16 martial cultivation families, as well as the Seven Profound Valleys Total Faction, converged at the Profound Sky Mountain Range and waited to enter the entrance.

With so many young talents gathered, Lin Ming was inconspicuous in the crowd. Although he had aroused a lot of interest in Desert Flower Hall a few days ago, compared to the middle Pulse Condensation or late Pulse Condensation talents, he was only a little genius worth paying attention to, unworthy of being the cause of widespread discussion amongst everyone.



# Chapter 239 – Let Me Use The Seraphic Pond

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In the continuous 10,000 miles of the Profound Sky Mountains, the Seven Profound area was located in the center. It was rumored that once, there had been a Purple Flood Dragon who had ascended into a True Dragon, and it died here, its bones were buried in the ground for 10,000 years and forming an ancient dragon vein mountain range. The Profound Sky Mountains' greatest mountain peak was the center of where this dragon pulse mountain range had been.

Because of this, the heaven and earth origin energy in the Profound Sky Mountains was exceedingly rich. If one cultivated here, they would get twice the result with half the effort. Not only that, but there was an abundant true essence stone vein located in a canyon of the Profound Sky Mountains that produced not ordinary true essence stones, but high-quality medium-grade true essence stones, and even high-grade true essence stones.

These high quality true essence stones were only given to core disciples and Elders of the sect. An ordinary martial artist would never have heard of them, much less use them.

At this time, there was a gathering of young talents in an open area at the entrance of the Profound Sky Mountains.

Because there were too many people, Qin Ziya and his group were assigned a space that was only a few dozen feet wide. Lin Ming and Ling Sen sat cross-legged on the ground, tuning their condition. However, Zhou Yu and Liang Long weren't as calm. They were worrying that they might not even pass the mountain gate. If they

couldn't even get through the first hurdle, it would be a big shame for them.

“If your heart isn't still, it will be very difficult to display your true potential.” Qin Ziya slowly said from the side. Naturally, he was referring to Zhou Yu and Liang long.

Zhou Yu and Liang Long were embarrassed. They certainly understood this, but it was difficult to keep their hearts steady knowing their own lack of strength.

But as they helplessly sat down and began adjusting their mental state, a voice suddenly sounded out, “Oh my, if it isn't Martial House Qin from the Sky Fortune Kingdom? How fortunate it is to meet you!”

Qin Ziya turned his head and saw a tall and thin middle-aged man wearing a long gray robe walking towards him, all smiles.

Qin Ziya politely cupped his fists in greetings, and frostily said, “Martial House Master Luo, how nice to see you here!”

Martial House Master Luo glanced at Lin Ming before sweeping his vision across each of the Sky Fortune Kingdom disciples, probing their cultivation. His expression became even happier than it was before. This Sky Fortune Kingdom hadn't even sent out a single Pulse Condensation period disciple. The only one that had a chance of accomplishing anything was Qin Xingxuan, but she was just too young, so she wouldn't get much results. He already expected the Sky Fortune Kingdom to be a complete debacle during

this Total Faction Martial Meeting.

“Martial House Master Qin, are these the five disciples that you brought this time? How come you also have one at the early Bone Forging stage? With great strength like that, won’t it be difficult to cross the gate?” Martial House Master Luo said with a touch of sarcasm.

The only one with an early Bone Forging cultivation was Ling Sen, his words were just too harsh and grating on the ears. Ling Sen opened his eyes to glance at Martial House Master Luo before returning to his meditative state. To someone like Ling Sen, who was impersonal and a bit cold-blooded at times, how others perceived him was simply meaningless.

“Strength doesn’t just depend on cultivation.” Qin Ziya faintly said, before disinclining to speak to the other party again.

This Martial House Master Luo was the Martial House Master of Huoluo Nation’s Seven Profound Martial House. He and Qin Ziya had been disciples together during their time at the Seven Profound Valleys, and their relationship had been somewhat rocky. Afterwards, they were later assigned to hold the position of Martial House Master in the neighboring countries of Huoluo Nation and Sky Fortune Kingdom. Huoluo Nation and Sky Fortune Kingdom were doomed to be in the same group together. Ever since then, the two Martial Houses had been in a silently fierce competition. Martial House Master Luo never missed a chance to step on Qin Ziya’s back.

“What Martial House Master Qin said is right, it is true that

cultivation doesn't represent someone's total strength, but it is the most important factor in determining strength. Since our Huoluo Nation is so close to your Sky Fortune Kingdom, our fates will be intertwined at this Total Faction Martial Meeting, and we will experience honor and disgrace together. Since it is like this, we should support each other in order to attain the best result. At least, we should all be able to pass through the mountain gate."

As Martial House Master Luo said this, ten young disciples walked forwards from behind him in greeting. Although Huoluo Nation was a second-grade country, Huoluo Nation was several times larger than Sky Fortune Kingdom, and thus, they were given a quota of ten people instead of five.

These ten individuals were all around 20 years old. There were three of them whose cultivation had reached the early Pulse Condensation period, and even one who had reached the middle Pulse Condensation period. The rest were at the peak Bone Forging stage.

Huoluo Nation was among the top ranked in the 36 countries. Because of this, their homegrown disciples always had a hint of superior attitude, not to mention that they had several people whose cultivation exceeded anyone from Sky Fortune Kingdom by far.

Altogether they had six people at peak Bone Forging, three at early Pulse Condensation, and one at middle Pulse Condensation. In comparison, Sky Fortune Kingdom had one at early Bone Forging, one at middle Bone Forging, and three at peak Bone Forging.

This cultivation comparison was simply out of proportions. Martial House Master Luo's smile only became more brilliant, he was only interested in showing off.

The Huoluo Nation talents looked at Lin Ming and his group with disdain in their eyes. Zhou Yu and Liang Long frowned, suppressing the simmering rage in their hearts. As geniuses, they had always been proud and arrogant. What they couldn't stand the most was being stepped on by others.

At this moment, Lin Ming rubbed his chin, remembering something.

“Huoluo Nation...”

He remembered Huoluo Nation's Seraphic Pond that was located at Seraphic Pond Mountain. It was a divine pool of water that contained very pure heaven and earth origin energy, and it was of great benefit to any martial artist below the Houtian realm.

At first, a fake Qin Ziya had used Seraphic Pond Mountain as bait in order to deceive Lin Ming and lure him out of the Seven Profound Martial House. He had ridden to the Southern Wilderness on a Heavenly Wind Eagle and this dark plan had almost killed him.

Thinking this, Lin Ming was somewhat thoughtful as he looked at the middle Pulse Condensation period youth. The youth's face had a certain arrogant streak to it. Of course, he had the ability to

be like this. To reach the middle Pulse Condensation period at 21 years of age was quite decent even in the Seven Profound Valleys' Total Faction.

Huoluo Nation had the Seraphic Pond as well as a larger land area and more resources. Thus, their disciples were able to enjoy more resources than those from Sky Fortune Kingdom. It wasn't strange or surprising that they would have a higher cultivation.

“This middle Pulse Condensation period youth has definitely bathed in the Seraphic Pond waters.”

Lin Ming guessed. He didn't care about the look of contempt in the others' eyes. Rather, he was looking him up and down, sizing him up as if he were some delicious prey.

Lin Ming had already noticed the conflict between Qin Ziya and Martial House Master Luo. Martial House Master Luo was malicious and rude, just like a snake in the grass. As for Qin Ziya, he simply didn't bother to respond to the other side. There was probably a long standing grudge between the two middle-aged men.

Thinking this, Lin Ming's lips curved up in a sly smile. He sent a true essence sound transmission to Qin Ziya.

Qin Ziya had already sat back down, preparing to return to meditation, completely ignoring Martial House Master Luo's display of showing off. But after he heard Lin Ming's true essence sound transmission, he opened both his eyes to look at Lin Ming

with a strange expression.

This kid, he was quite roguish.

“At the Total Faction Martial Meeting, our 36 countries are on the weaker side. That’s why we should help each other out and show a united front. Huoluo Nation and Sky Fortune Kingdom are brothers, that’s why we will be in the same group. When the time comes and if we encounter each other on the martial stage, we should show some mercy and lighten our hands, lest we harm each other and find the next match even more difficult.”

Martial House Master Luo said this with a smug tone. His meaning was naturally to have the Huoluo Nation disciples show mercy and not injure the Sky Fortune Kingdom disciples.

At this time, Qin Ziya took the words and suddenly said, “Mm. At that time we shouldn’t fight with such a heavy hand. Lin Ming, Ling Sen, when the time comes, remember to be gentle and don’t hurt them too much, understood?”

“Yes, Martial House Master. I’ll try my best.” Lin Ming replied with a mischievous smile. As for Ling Sen, he simply nodded his head, unclear of the situation.

As Qin Ziya said this, Martial House Master Luo looked a bit depressed. What was the meaning of this? Since when was it your turn to show us any mercy?

The ten disciples he brought along were also looking happy. Try my best? Don't hurt them? You can actually say this with a straight face? Especially looking at Lin Ming's smiling face. Later, they would return the favor and smack him black and blue. At that time, they would see whether or not he could still smile like that.

"Hehe, Old Qin, you really have faith in your disciples. How confident!" Martial House Master Luo said with a smirk, ridicule hiding between all his words.

"It's fine. This time, I brought a few disciples whose strengths are quite good. It's not a problem if they leap up a few realms to fight someone else."

"Oh, is that so? Which ones?" Martial House Master Luo smiled as he listened to Qin Ziya spout his nonsense. He was thinking that when the time came, he would expose him to the world, and then, he would see if Qin Ziya still had the air to blabber anymore lies.

"Mm... for instance, Lin Ming." Qin Ziya said, pointing towards Lin Ming. He said, "Don't look at Lin Ming's peak Bone Forging cultivation. It's no problem at all for him to deal with even a middle Pulse Condensation period martial artist."

Qin Ziya's voice had just fallen when the middle Pulse Condensation period youth from Huoluo Nation coldly snorted and said, "Really? Then I must ask for advice!"

When the two middle-aged Martial House Masters were speaking, their dialogue was quite rude. But since Qin Ziya had



mentioned the middle Pulse Condensation period, he was obviously aiming at him. If he could tolerate this, what else did he have to tolerate?

“Don’t be so anxious. Huoluo Nation and Sky Fortune Kingdom will encounter each other sooner or later. Lin Ming, remember to use a light hand, otherwise you might injure them and damage our relationship.” Qin Ziya casually spoke these irritating words as if he didn’t care. The middle Pulse Condensation period youth was at a point in his life where he was filled with abundant courage and hot-headed attitude, and he had been known as a genius ever since childhood. How could he tolerate such insult and provocation?

He took a step forwards and coldly said, “Lin Ming, I am Wang Mu from Huoluo Nation. We can have a little match now if you’d like!”

Lin Ming only smiled back, not saying anything. Martial House Master Luo waved his hand to stop the impulsive Wang Wu. In such a crowded space, it was naturally impossible for them to compete in martial arts.

Martial House Master Luo laughed, and said with a smile, “Martial House Master Qin, your little brother here is quite the confident one. What happens if you lose?”

“This... haha.” Qin Ziya only smiled, not speaking anymore.

At this time, Lin Ming suddenly said, “If I lose, I will give you a high-grade human-step treasure.”

Martial House Master Luo only sneered, not responding. There was a great variance in quality among high-grade human-step treasures. He didn't expect Lin Ming to come out with anything worthwhile, he was someone that wouldn't even disdain a glance towards an inferior high-grade human-step treasure.

Lin Ming also said, "And then, I'll also add in a Blue Miracle Pill and a bottle of Body Spiritual Ichor." This Blue Miracle Pill and Body Spiritual Ichor was the reward he obtained from Qin Ziya for defeating Ling Sen and Ta Ku. He still hadn't used them.

As Lin Ming said this, Wang Mu's face changed. A Blue Miracle Pill and bottle of Body Spiritual Ichor would have no small effect on his cultivation. He immediately agreed and said, "Alright, I'll hold you to your word!"

"Of course. I can also take an oath on my heart of martial arts. But... what if I win?" Lin Ming said with a sudden turn, his wily nature coming out as all of his fox tails were exposed. In a bet such as this, it was common to bet all possessions. Lin Ming was already too familiar with a scene like this.

"What did you say?" Wang Mu laughed, he never even thought that he would lose.

"Simple. If I win, I want to take a dip in your Huoluo Nation's Seraphic Pond a few times."

## Chapter 240 – Mountain Gate Trial

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‘So they had this idea all along; it seems they’ve taken a fancy towards my Huoluo Nation’s Seraphic Pond?’ Martial House Master Luo wasn’t stupid. He knew that there was something strange with the way Qin Ziya was speaking a moment ago, it turned out he was trying to deliberately provoke him.

It seemed that they really had confidence in their Lin Ming. Perhaps that little boy really might be able to jump over a realm and fight a middle Pulse Condensation period martial artist. But, Wang Mu wasn’t an ordinary middle Pulse Condensation period martial artist. His combat prowess was able to compare to the late Pulse Condensation period. If this was their wishful thinking, their carefully laid plans had all gone wrong.

Martial House Master Luo narrowed his eyes as he began to size up Lin Ming. He was wondering whether or not this young boy in front of him would be able to deal with a late Pulse Condensation period martial artist. However, it was only a very low probability. The difference between the Bone Forging stage and the Pulse Condensation period was simply too big. For a normal talent, even jumping over half a realm was considered incredible. But to jump over an entire realm was extremely rare – even within the Seven Profound Valleys Total Faction.

Since the chances of winning were greater than the chances of losing, Martial House Master Luo intended to agree to this gambling bet.

He said, “The Seraphic Pond is an important land of my Huoluo

Nation. There is only a finite amount of inherent true essence contained within the waters, every year we can only send 3 or 4 people to use it. And to think you even want to soak in the waters a few times, your appetite is quite big!” Although Martial House Master Luo knew that the chances of winning were greater than losing, he still wanted to hedge his bets and give himself a way out.

“Then how about one time?” Lin Ming knew that the first time soaking in the Seraphic Pond would be the best. If he bathed in the waters too much, the effects would lessen to an unnoticeable degree.

Wang Mu thought that Lin Ming was simply a blithering idiot. In his opinion, Lin Ming was simply digging his own grave and personally handing out such great treasures like the Blue Miracle Pill and the Body Spiritual Ichor. The former was a top tier pill, able to increase one’s cultivation and the latter was able to wash down one’s muscles and marrows, removing pill toxins from their body. If these two were used together, their effects would be the best.

If he was able to take these two medicines, then his cultivation would increase and he would become much closer to reaching the late Pulse Condensation period.

However, why would this idiot Lin Ming have the Blue Miracle Pill and Body Spiritual Ichor and not use them on himself? Instead, he was actually ripping himself off and giving them to others.

Thinking about the future Blue Miracle Pill and Body Spiritual Ichor, Wang Mu excitedly licked his lips, looking at Martial House

Master Luo. Martial House Master Luo nodded his head, agreeing to this gambling bet.

Wang Mu hurriedly said, “Okay, if I lose, then you can use Huoluo Nation’s Seraphic Pond one time. I won’t take advantage of you, I will also take an oath on my heart of martial arts!”

Wang Mu was afraid that Lin Ming would later renege on his promise, so he also tacked on an oath on his heart of martial arts as insurance.

Wang Mu and Lin Ming both clapped their hands together as they made their oath, both looking quite happy. Martial House Master Luo looked at Wang Mu with a smiling face, but as he glanced at Lin Ming’s even brighter smile, he had a feeling that something was wrong.

With two people laughing, there had to be one of them crazily giggling inside...

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One hour later, a beautiful and exquisite melody began to descend from the Profound Sky Mountain Range. Lin Ming looked up and saw a blue boat gently floating over. The boat was several dozen feet long, and glittered all over with strange runes and symbols. There was a hazy halo of light that wrapped around the boat like an eggshell, and at the front of the boat there were three people standing side by side. Two of them were middle-aged men wearing purple, and one was a very beautiful woman in white.

Although they were far in the distance, Lin Ming could still feel a faint suppressive feeling coming from these three, not much inferior to the aura that Mu Qianyu gave out.

Extreme Xiantian?

From just these three people's cultivations, Lin Ming thought they might not be much weaker than Mu Qianyu. However, Mu Qianyu was only 27 years old. As for these three, they weren't spring chickens anymore. The disparity was simply too great.

At this moment, Qin Ziya whispered, "The Total Faction Martial Meeting will have the presence of the Valley Masters. All three of them are Valley Masters of the Seven Profound Valleys. Stay still and don't make any noise.

Facing the power and majesty of the three Valley Masters, even Qin Ziya felt suppressed. He unconsciously held his breath and stood there with hands relaxed.

The spirit boat stopped above the gate. The beautiful woman in white stepped forwards, and her ten fingers flashed as she made a series of seals. With a rumbling sound, the mountain rocks in front of everyone began to split, and giant crack emerged as stone began to pull apart. A 1000 foot long white jade tablet rose from the rocks and floated into the air. There was an array formation that was inscribed onto the white jade tablet and many seals and runes slowly circled it, shining iridescently. Underneath the white jade tablet, massive white jade steps appeared and formed a path

forwards, extending almost 10,000 feet towards the distance gate.

In the square below, many of the young talents and geniuses were watching with wide eyes. For many of them, this was their first time participating in the Total Faction Martial Meeting, so they were ignorant about what would happen. They hadn't dreamed that there would be such a massive white jade tablet hiding amidst the rocks.

“So this is the mountain gate trial.” Lin Ming narrowed his eyes as he saw the giant white jade steps. After acquiring the second soul fragment, he had a very deep understanding of array formations. He could see that the white jade steps underneath that tablet were actually an illusion formed by an array formation. This was an illusionary killing array!

There were 1080 steps altogether, each a foot high. The beautiful woman in white standing on the spirit boat said, “You have an incense stick of time to climb the white jade steps and enter the mountain gate! Light the incense!”

As the beautiful woman finished, she waved her hand and tossed a giant incense burner into the mountain square. There was a ten foot long incense stick that was as thick as an arm and was placed inside, already lit. Although this incense stick was 10 feet high, the rate at which it was burning was much faster than normal; it probably wasn't any slower than a normal stick of incense.

Some of the first-time participants of the Total Faction Martial Meeting weren't able to resist, and instantly launched their movement techniques to rush forwards, just like a flying locust

swarm heading towards the white jade stairs. But, those martial artists that had already participated in the Total Faction Martial Meeting didn't seem in a hurry as they slowly moved up the white jade steps one at a time. Looking at the newbies rushing upwards, these old timers tried to hide their smiles, waiting to see just how these new participants would suffer.

The white jade steps were a thousand feet wide; it wasn't crowded even if two or three hundred people were standing side by side. After the first disciples stepped onto the white jade steps, a great number of symbols began to light up on the stairs. As these symbols circulated, a massive pressure suddenly pushed down on the jade steps. Several of the disciples who hadn't been prepared were pulled down by this tremendous force and tumbled onto the jade steps, looking confused as they smashed into the floor.

“Be careful, there's something strange about these stairs.”

Seeing so many disciples be defeated so quickly, some people began to cry out in alarm. But the truth was, this was just an obvious matter. If the jade steps didn't have some unusual feature, then wouldn't everyone be able to rush up the stairs in just an incense stick of time?

In the blink of an eye, several dozen disciples had fallen down onto the floor. But those disciples that were experienced hunched down in order to lower their center of gravity. As they stepped up the stairs one at a time, their speed began to fall.

At this time, the disparity in cultivation was suddenly reflected for all to see. A young girl in white and carrying a long zither



didn't seem nearly as affected by the pressure like everyone else. Her steps were like a cool breeze as she stepped towards the mountain gate in a relaxed manner. The mountain wind sent her clothes fluttering around. The young girl had a very calm demeanor; it was like she wasn't even walking towards the mountain gate, but was instead taking a casual stroll.

“It's the Zither Faction's direct disciple, Qin Wuxin.”

Some people recognized the identity of the white-clothed young girl. All disciples were required to participate in the Total Faction Martial Meeting's mountain gate trial; the direct disciples were no exception. But to them, this was simply a walk; the jade step's illusionary magic array might as well only exist in name for them.

“The difference is too great!”

This thought was inevitably born in the hearts of some. These people were all outstanding talents from their martial families or countries, and had grown up under the halo of being a genius. But now, in comparison to Qin Wuxin, they were simply nothing at all.

This wasn't enough to discourage them, but at this moment, two shadows rushed up the jade steps. Although they weren't as calm and tranquil as the white-clothed girl, their speed was at least three times faster.

“Jiang Baoyun, let's see which one of us is faster!” The youth speaking wore all white. He held a fan in his hands, and he looked like a handsome god fashioned from the purest jade.

Next to him was an 18 or 19 year old youth wearing all black, carrying a cold longsword on his back. His eyebrows were slanted like scimitars and he had a very solemn expression, his momentum was outstanding. This youth was the direct disciple of the Sword Faction, Jiang Baoyun, and the handsome man holding a fan on the side was the Acacia Faction's direct disciple, Ouyang Ming.

The two of them were quick like phantoms. In only a few breaths of time, they had reached the middle of the jade stairs, where they stopped for a moment before continuing up to the entrance.

There were also some young and powerful heroes following behind Jiang Baoyun and Ouyang Ming. But, their strengths were much weaker, and they were barely standing on their feet, moving slowly step by step. With their turtle-like speed, they would probably not arrive at the mountain gate before the incense burned out, or even before sunset.

Qin Ziya's group began to walk up. Ling Sen and Lin Ming took the initiative to walk up the jade stairs first. As soon as Lin Ming stepped on the first stair, he felt his body sink down and his speed tremendously fall.

“The direct disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys really do have some ability. Even a Pulse Condensation period martial artist would be suppressed under this formidable gravitational pull. But, there are actually some people that can shoot up these jade steps like meteors...”

As Lin Ming thought this, he changed the flow of true essence circulating in his body, and a surge of wind gusted around him as he activated Golden Roc Shattering the Void. Lin Ming's body became as light as cotton, and he easily floated up to the top. He wasn't fast, but his steps were incomparably calm, as if he was standing on clouds.

Although the jade stairs contained a terrifying gravitational force, it was fundamentally useless under the Concept of Wind and Golden Roc Shattering the Void.

Compared to Lin Ming, Ling Sen wasn't so tranquil. He was obviously moving up the jade steps using his strength, but his speed actually wasn't any slower than Lin Ming.

As Ling Sen saw Lin Ming look as if he were taking a casual stroll through the park, Ling Sen was startled. It seemed as if Lin Ming wasn't using any effort at all, while he was using 70% of his true essence. The more Ling Sen got to know Lin Ming, the more he discovered that Lin Ming was simply unfathomable.

Zhou Yu and Liang Long watched Ling Sen and Lin Ming climbed up and exchanged bitter looks with each other. Sooner or later, they had to eat the consequences. Now, they could only brace themselves.

“Lin Ming looks so relaxed, it shouldn't be that difficult. At least, there should be some trick to it...” Zhou Yu consoled himself, and then he stepped onto the first jade step.

As he took a step, Zhou Yu instantly felt as if his body filled with lead, and he was drowning. Luckily, he had already mentally prepared himself for this, or else he would have already fallen flat on the ground and made a fool of himself.

“Such a strong gravitational force!” Zhou Yu pushed the true essence in his body to the limit, but he was still as slow as an ox pulling a broken cart.

Liang Long was even worse off than Zhou Yu. On the jade steps he felt like both of his feet had been trapped in quicksand. Every step took an enormous amount of strength. Seeing all the young talented heroes rushing past him, he could only shout out.

“Goddamn, are these fellows really human?”

## Chapter 241 – A Gathering Of Heroes

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Lin Ming quickly flew to the middle of the jade steps. At this time, he heard a cold voice sound out from behind him. “Boy, you have a little skill, it seems I underestimated you.”

Lin Ming turned around to see Huoluo Nation’s Wang Mu following him from behind, not too far away. He looked quite relaxed. Apparently, he hadn’t used much effort.

“Thank you. You’re not that bad yourself.” Lin Ming casually said.

Hearing Lin Ming’s casual tone, Wang Mu coldly snorted and said, “Let’s see just how long you’ll be so arrogant for.”

As one neared the middle of the jade steps, the number of martial artists increased. There were some martial artists pacing back and forth here, their advance extremely slow.

Although Lin Ming thought that there was something unusual about this, he didn’t slow down. He headed towards the gate with the same speed as before.

‘Come on, you’re going up so fast, I want to see when you’re beaten.’ Wang Mu cursed in his heart. There was a small trap in the middle of the jade steps. If one wasn’t careful, it would be easy to suffer a shameful loss. Although this wasn’t enough to defeat someone with Lin Ming’s strength, this failure was enough to make him feel much better about himself.

The surrounding martial artists also saw Lin Ming rushing straight up towards the middle of the jade steps and harbored schadenfreude in their minds. “This kid probably doesn’t know there’s a trap waiting for him.”

“Even a seasoned Pulse Condensation period martial artist has to be prepared for it, otherwise it’s too easy to be caught off guard.”

Everyone was using true essence sound transmissions in order to talk, they weren’t very happy after being surpassed.

As soon as Lin Ming’s foot stepped on the middle of the jade steps, he discovered that something was wrong there. Even Ouyang Ming and Jiang Baoyun had stopped there for several breaths of time instead of making their way through in one breath.

“So there’s a separate illusionary killing array here...” Lin Ming thought as he saw the symbols on the jade steps suddenly flare up and an origin energy air current begin to flow forth from the array formation, coming completely perpendicular as it tried to impact him.

Lin Ming swept out with his soul force and saw that the air current was roughly equivalent to the all-out attack of the weakest Pulse Condensation period martial artist. Although it would be simple to block it, dodging it would require much less effort.

As he activated Golden Roc Shattering the Void, Lin Ming’s body felt like a feather underneath the influence of the Concept of

Wind. With his overwhelmingly fast movements, he was able to completely dodge all of the origin energy air currents. Because he was too quick, Lin Ming's body turned into a series of afterimages. Soon, he reached the middle of the turbulent origin energy air currents, and in a few more moments of time he completely bypassed all of them.

“He dodged all of them?”

“How could he possibly dodge all of them? Even if a seasoned Pulse Condensation period martial artist arrived at this point, he would still have to use his thick true essence in order to resist the attack. The gravity here is too strong, it's impossible to hide.”

“What a freakish movement technique. In terms of movement technique, he's no weaker than any of the talents in the Seven Profound Valleys. I wonder just how different his combat ability is.”

The several young outstanding talents discussed amongst themselves. At this point, a white-clothed youth smiled and said, “You're wrong. The reason he was able to dodge the origin energy air currents was not because he used his movement technique, but because he has a powerful soul force. He figured out the pathing of the origin energy air currents with his soul force, and was able to calculate the path to take in order to not be struck by any of them. This person is a soul force genius. I saw him in Desert Flower Hall using his soul force. Against a martial artist with his cultivation, he can defeat any of them in a second, even the Seven Profound Valleys' Ouyang Ziyun.”

“What? He instantly defeated Ouyang Ziyun? I see, so that’s how it is... I heard that the Acacia Faction’s Ouyang Ziyun had been done in by someone, it looks like it was this fellow...”

Many of the Seven Profound disciples present had already heard the news that Ouyang Ziyun had been severely wounded. The disciples of the other Six Factions would certainly not miss an opportunity to laugh at the Acacia Faction. Therefore the news of Ouyang Ziyun’s severe injuries had quickly spread all throughout the Seven Profound Valleys.

After some discussion, the nearby martial artists were all secretly paying attention to Lin Ming, especially the early Pulse Condensation period martial artists. They began to think of admitting defeat in advance if they encountered Lin Ming; they didn’t believe they were any stronger than Ouyang Ziyun.

After Lin Ming crossed the checkpoint in the middle of the jade stairs, there were no more obstacles ahead. Lin Ming rose straight up like a cloud, quickly reaching the mountain gate. Because Lin Ming was deliberately trying to hide his true strength, he started later than the others. When he arrived at the mountain gate, there were already around 70 people waiting there. Over 90% of them were disciples of the Total Faction, there were very few disciples from the 36 countries or 16 martial cultivation families.

Lin Ming knew that even if they arrived first, it didn’t mean that they were any more powerful than the disciples still on the jade steps. For the mountain gate trial, it was fine as long as one passed within the allotted time. There were many other disciples who were trying to hide their own strength too. These martial artists



didn't want to publicize their strength and arouse the attention of others ahead of time. But of course they couldn't be too slow, otherwise they would be mocked.

Three quarters of the incense stick was quickly burnt away. The separate illusionary killing array in the middle of the jade steps had eliminated a massive number of martial artists. Many of the people that arrived at this location had been distracted and then struck by the origin energy air current. Fortunately, the origin energy air current only created superficial injuries and wasn't fatal, otherwise young martial artists would be falling from the sky like flies.

Zhou Yu and Liang Long were still climbing up, looking like old men that were trying to crawl up a mountain. As they saw martial artist after martial artist pass them, they were unable to help looking at themselves with forced smiles. They also understood that the reason Qin Ziya had gathered them was in order to fulfill the quota of five people. From the start, the two of them never had any hope in passing the mountain gate trial.

“What are we going to do? Are we going to do it?” Liang Long looked at two martial artists that were sent flying by the origin energy air current in front of them, and his heart trembled in nervousness. The slower martial artists had weaker strength. At this point, anyone that was still here would find it impossible to cross the origin energy air current. If they tried, they would suffer the same fate and be sent soaring into the sky.

Zhou Yu clenched his teeth and said, “We'll do it! We've already come this far, even if we know perfectly well that there is no

chance of passing, if we give up right now then we will ruin our own hearts of martial arts! If we hadn't left the Sky Fortune Kingdom, then we would never have known just how big the disparity is between us and them, there is no way that we can stay idle!"

The four martial cultivation families of Sky Fortune Kingdom had always held a superior attitude. Now, Zhou Yu finally understood that let alone the disciples of their martial families, even if the four families themselves were placed in the Seven Profound territory, they would be considered nothing but small ants. In the surrounding several hundred thousand miles of land, there were probably countless martial families that were larger and more famous than their own.

As Zhou Yu and Liang Long took a step on the middle of the jade steps, they were struck by the origin energy air current and sent flying into the air. There were also several other martial artists that accompanied them on their trip. There were even some martial artists who, after being struck, got back on their feet and crawled forwards once more.

There were also those that were struck once and then gave up. And there were even those who didn't even get struck but turned around and gave up anyway, because they knew that they definitely wouldn't pass.

These repeated attempts and defeats of those who tried again and again and again were all reflected in Lin Ming's eyes. He sighed with emotion. He was just like them not too long ago, diligently striving for a far off hope, and yet tasting failure again and again.

For that desolate hope, one had to bet everything they had. That was the path of martial arts.

Even in the countless dimensions within the Realm of the Gods, there were countless martial artists, but eventually only a mere handful of them were ever able to stand at the pinnacle of all.

To arrive at that stage, they had to have perseverance, talent, but also opportunity!

But those lucky opportunities could only be obtained by the prepared, otherwise, those chances were worthless.

The three Valley Masters of the Seven Profound Valleys were loftily standing on the spirit boat, ignoring the martial artists underneath that were giving their all to climb up the stairs. To them, these disciples were nothing more than ants on the ground.

At this time, the incense began to burn slower. Although there was only a quarter of the incense stick left, it was still two and a half feet tall. Lin Ming estimated that at this rate, it would still take a little less than half an hour to finish.

So it turned out there was enough time after all. Lin Ming finally understood. This mountain gate trial was for the disciples themselves. It was in order to let those overconfident, brash, and arrogant young talents realize the difference between themselves and true talents. If they were discouraged by just this and gave up the climb, then they simply had no qualifications to walk down the

path of martial arts.

This was the ebb and this was the tide. Those who stayed would become more experienced and wizened. But as for those who were eliminated, they would be brought to their knees, unlikely to recover from this failure.

The young talents that had already reached the mountain gate looked down on those martial artists still struggling with a trace of contempt in their eyes. This contempt, to the marital artists still on the jade steps that had once thought themselves peerless geniuses, was also a catalyst.

They had always been accustomed to being superior; when had they ever received such contempt like this?

Noting the eyes of these talents, Lin Ming sighed again. These disciples only had the qualification to be called talents in the Seven Profound Valleys, and thus look down with disdain at others. But if they were placed in a higher, stronger sect, they might be the ones struggling to climb the jade steps.

For instance, take Mu Qianyu. Pulse Condensation at 15, Houtian at 17, Xiantian at 22. If the 20 year old Mu Qianyu was standing here, all of the geniuses present, including even the Seven Profound Valleys' three Valley Masters, would all be overshadowed by her brilliance!

Just as Lin Ming was in thought, he saw Qin Xingxuan finally reach the mountain gate, her face flushed red with effort and her

body dewy wet with perspiration. Lin Ming smiled in relief, greeted her, and then hastily handed her a bottle of true essence restoring pills.

Although she had just barely passed the mountain gate, this was still shocking enough with Qin Xingxuan's low age and her middle Bone Forging cultivation.

Less than half an hour later, the mountain gate trial was finally finished. There were many martial artists who had been worn out from exhaustion and collapsed on the stairs. Despite how hard they tried, they had still failed to reach the mountain gate. Liang Long and Zhou Yu were also two that failed to pass.

There were around 200 remaining martial artists; close to 60 of the original number had been eliminated. In this group of 200, 70% of them were disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys. There were only a few dozen disciples from the 36 countries and 16 martial families. There were even many early Pulse Condensation period martial artists that had been eliminated when they reached the origin energy air current. The origin energy air current was equal to the full force strike of the weakest Pulse Condensation period martial artist. Not only that, but there were several dozens of these origin energy air currents connected together. A weak early Pulse Condensation martial artist wouldn't be able to bear all of them.

Of the Sky Fortune Kingdom group, the ones that remained were Ling Sen, Lin Ming, and Qin Xingxuan. In these 36 countries, it had to be known that at least half of them completely failed in entering. Only large countries like Huoluo Nation and Grace Venerate Nation who had a quota of ten people still had three

disciples left over.

Sky Fortune Kingdom was originally a country that was placed in the middle of the pack. That they could have such success at this Martial Meeting was simply too surprising.

As for the 16 martial families, their situation was somewhat better than the 36 countries. These ancient martial families usually had a specially trained disciple, and therefore they would usually have at least one disciple left over. There were some large martial families that even had 2 or 3 disciples left.

## Chapter 242 – The Martial Meeting Begins

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As Lin Ming stepped through the gate into the Profound Sky Mountains, he immediately felt that the heaven and earth origin energy was much thicker here, by around 60 to 70%. If one were to cultivate here, they would have twice the result with half the effort.

As he turned around to look back at the gate, he was surprised to see faintly shining charms and runes inscribed onto it. Apparently, there was also an array formation placed on the mountain gate.

“I see, so the Profound Sky Mountains were formed over the center of a dragon pulse, but there was also an array formation barrier that gathered the heaven and earth origin energy.” Not even considering the highest peak of the Profound Sky Mountains, but even the heaven and earth origin energy of Profound Sky City was much more vibrant than Sky Fortune Kingdom’s by far, not to mention all the other resources that were available to the Seven Profound Valleys. No wonder this caused so many martial artists to be jealous, and why even peak Bone Forging martial artists would rather stay and defend Profound Sky City as gate guards than go to a smaller country and work as commanders.

It wasn’t only Lin Ming who discovered the extremely rich heaven and earth origin energy of the Profound Sky Mountains. Many of the young talented heroes that came for the first time were amazed, vividly speaking about this astonishing phenomenon. They also began to envy the resources that were available to the disciples of the Total Faction.

Not too far away from the main road on a cliff, there were several Seven Profound Valleys disciples that were looking down on the dense stream of people. Their expressions seemed as if they were accustomed to seeing this small fry country bumpkin martial artist entering their city.

“Is that him?” A white-clothed man standing in front of the group asked a nearby disciple with true essence sound transmission as he tapped his fingers.

“Yes, it’s that guy, his name is Lin Ming. He was the one that injured Ouyang Ziyun.”

“In the mountain gate trial, what number was he?” Although the ranking of the mountain gate trial didn’t reveal one’s true strength, it was usable as a reference point.

“Around 80 something. I don’t recall the exact number.”

“A decent rank. With such a rank, there is no need to worry that he won’t qualify later. It’s better like this; I will make him rue the day he was born.” The white-clothed man revealed a sinister smile as he said this.

At this moment from in the crowd, Lin Ming suddenly turned his head to look at him.

They faced each other, then Lin Ming smiled and turned back.



The white-clothed man was surprised. “He truly is worthy of being called a soul force genius, his perception is keen to the degree of startling me. He’s even able to sense when people are observing him. Well, good, I’m becoming more and more interested in this fellow.”

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One year ago, Lin Ming would never have dreamed that on his sixteenth birthday he would actually enter into the Seven Profound Valleys. At that time, the Seven Profound Valleys was simply a heaven-like existence that was too distant a goal. Not mentioning the Seven Profound Valleys, even Sky Fortune Kingdom’s Seven Profound Martial House was beyond difficult for him to reach.

Now, on the same day as Lin Ming’s sixteenth birthday, the Total Faction Martial Meeting would officially begin.

The martial field was located at the highest peak of the Profound Sky Mountains, which was also where the Seven Profound Valleys Total Faction was located.

The Profound Sky Mountains’ highest peak was 60,000 feet high. This mountain was simply incomparably massive and rocky. The mountain exuded an invisible pressure that would cause a weak martial artist to feel extremely suppressed, only able to display 50% of their strength.

As the sun rose, there were already thousands of people gathered

at the square in front of Great Hall. There were disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys, as well as high ranking individuals of large families and guests of the Seven Profound Valleys. The Seven Profound Valleys had invited them here to watch the Martial Meeting, and also to show their own strength.

The Great Hall's square was 10 miles wide, and flat and smooth as a whetstone. A martial arts master had cut down this section of the mountain and flattened it. At this time, the square was divided into ten regions. Each region was separated by an array formation, and these array formations covered the entire area in order to isolate all true essence, so there wasn't any danger of being affected by the aftermath of fighting.

There were 209 young talented heroes that had managed to pass through the mountain gate. These talents were divided into ten groups, each group having 20 or 21 individuals. Out of these groups, 10 of them would eventually qualify for the next stage. Once all ten groups were added together, there would be a total of 100 disciples.

Those would be the first 100 rankings of the Total Faction Martial Meeting. If one could make it to the top 100, it was already a result to be proud of.

As for those young outstanding talents, they also had an opportunity to continue. They were able to pass through a Ten Thousand Killing Array for a ranking. As long as they passed the mountain gate trial, they would be able to obtain an exact ranking.

Lin Ming already knew which group he would be in – the sixth

group. This grouping was not drawn from lots, but was decided by the Seven Profound Valleys.

Sky Fortune Kingdom and Huoluo Nation were both in the same area. At every Total Faction Martial Meeting, they would be assigned to the same group. In addition, there were also three countries and martial cultivation families. Altogether there were 5 second-grade influences on their side.

During this Martial Meeting, these five influences had brought a total of 9 people that were able to pass the mountain gate trial. Sky Fortune Kingdom had three, Huoluo Nation had three, the two large martial families had three, and the rest had none.

The sixth group had 21 disciples altogether. Besides these 9 people, the other 12 were disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys Total Faction.

The Total Faction assigned the groupings of their disciples based on the rank at which they passed the mountain gate. This was in order to ensure that every group had an average strength within.

As Lin Ming began to size up his competition, he suddenly heard the cry of a bird coming from up above. He looked up and saw a massive Heavenly Wind Eagle flapping its wings and circling around. This Heavenly Wind Eagle had a commanding aura as it flew in the skies of the Profound Sky Mountains, looking down at the world below with scorn.

This Heavenly Wind Eagle was several times larger than an

ordinary Heavenly Wind Eagle. Not only that, but its wings were a deep gold. This golden color made one think that this bird was actually a Golden-winged Roc, or maybe that this big eagle was from the lineage of a Saint Beast.

“It’s people from Peacock Mountain. Humph, they are too arrogant. Not only are they not coming down to the entrance, but they are still hovering in the sky.”

“There’s nothing we can do about it. For the past 100 years, Peacock Mountain has been getting more and more fierce, and is beginning to pressure us. It’s normal for them to act arrogantly...”

Lin Ming was standing beside the Seven Profound Valleys disciples of the sixth group as they spoke amongst each other in a low voice.

“Peacock Mountain? What sort of place is that?” Lin Ming had never heard of this place before.

Qin Ziya said, “Peacock Mountain is 800,000 miles away from the Seven Profound Valleys, and is also a third-grade sect. Their strength is superior to the Seven Profound Valleys, especially in the last 100 years. There are several peerless talents that have emerged from Peacock Mountain, and they’ve already become one of the top grade-three sects. During every Total Faction Martial Meeting, Peacock Mountain will always send some people to watch and understand the strength of the Seven Profound Valleys’ younger generation. Of course, our Seven Profound Valleys also sends people to attend the tournament that they hold.”

“I see... how many grade-three sects are there in the Sky Spill Continent? What is the highest grade sect?” Lin Ming couldn’t help but ask this. As he came into contact more and more with the vast world, the increasing number of superpowers left him astonished.

Qin Ziya forced a smile and said, “I’m not too sure. Our Seven Profound Valleys mostly only communicates with other third-grade sects. As for those higher-grade sects, they are simply out of reach...”

Qin Ziya’s voice had just fallen, when a clarion cry resonated in the sky. This was even more high-pitched than the Heavenly Wind Eagle, and was simply frightening.

As the golden Heavenly Wind Eagle in the air heard this cry, it suddenly became frightened. Its lofty and arrogant manner completely evaporated, and it soared down in panic.

Thousands of eyes turned up to the horizon. At this time, everyone was looking completely dumbfounded.

“Vermillion Bird!!!!”

“Heavens! A Vermillion Bird! Is it for real!?”

That golden Heavenly Wind Eagle from a moment ago only had the bloodline of a Saint Beast. But a Vermillion Bird was a true

Saint Beast. Because there were no True Phoenixes within the Sky Spill Continent, the Vermillion Bird was considered the king of all bird. Once the golden Heavenly Wind Eagle encountered the Vermillion Bird, it would inevitably feel a deep dread and dismay emerge from its bloodline, and could only flee in panic. How could it possibly dare to occupy the same skies as a Vermillion Bird?

“I’ve never seen a Saint Beast in my entire life! Even the sect elders might have never seen something like this!”

“This is truly worthy of being the Seven Profound Valleys Total Faction. In my small land it would simply be impossible for me to ever see a Saint Beast...” A disciple from the 16 martial families clenched his fists, his face ruddy with excitement. To see a legendary Saint Beast, he felt that he could say he lived his life without regret.

Lin Ming noticed that the several Total Faction disciples near him were speaking as if they were at a loss on how to explain this. A Seven Profound Valleys disciple thought aloud, “One of the factions actually has a Vermillion Bird? I’ve been here for over 20 years and I’ve never heard something like this...”

The Vermillion Bird flew to the top of the Profound Sky Mountains’ highest peak. Even the usually calm Qin Ziya seemed to have lost all his composure. He said, “They... they are probably people from Divine Phoenix Island. That is... a fourth-grade sect.”

The various graded sects usually stayed in their own circles. A fourth-grade sect wouldn’t normally associate or speak with a third-grade sect. Qin Ziya had said that the Seven Profound Valleys

didn't keep in contact with a fourth-grade sect, but in the next moment, a fourth-grade sect had actually come.

Listening to Qin Ziya's words, Lin Ming gulped, his face revealing a strange color.

"Divine Phoenix Island?" Qin Xingxuan echoed as she watched the Vermillion Bird flying in the sky. Qin Xingxuan's eyes filled with longing. How nice would it be if she could ever have her own Vermillion Bird?

Qin Ziya said, "Divine Phoenix Island is among the top of all fourth-grade sects. I never expected that they would come to the Seven Profound Valleys' Total Faction Martial Meeting. This is the probably the first time that this has happened in the last several hundred years..."

Qin Ziya hadn't finished when the Seven Profound Valleys' spirit boat flew up to welcome the guests.

Lin Ming glanced upwards. The ones on the spirit boat were the three Valley Masters of the Seven Profound Valleys. In order to have such a welcoming party, it could only be for the absolute pinnacle existence.

"The guest is strong and the host is weak. Not only that, but we are lower by an entire grade. It's just the way it is..." Qin Ziya said as he shook his head. The difference in power between grades was enormous. For instance, Sky Fortune Kingdom was a second-grade power whilst the Seven Profound Valleys was a third-grade

power. When someone came from the Seven Profound Valleys who wasn't even an elder, like Ouyang Dihua, the Emperor of Sky Fortune Kingdom had to come out and pay his respects, lest he provoke the other. With this, the difference between the two could be ascertained.

The Seven Profound Valleys' Valley Master Shi Zongtian had just gotten the message a few days ago that Divine Phoenix Island would be sending out someone to observe their Total Faction Martial Meeting. Shi Zongtian had been absolutely bewildered by this; he had no idea why a fourth-grade sect would suddenly decide to take interest in the festivities.

"I am the Seven Profound Valleys' Valley Master, Shi Zongtian. I cordially welcome the martial cultivators from Divine Phoenix Island to our land," Shi Zongtian said as he stood in front on the spirit boat, cupping his fists together in greetings. His welcome had embodied respect, while not showing too much humility.

"Valley Master Shi, well met." The one who spoke was a black-clothed woman wearing a mask. Her cultivation was at the extreme Xiantian realm. There were also two maids behind her clothed in purple, whose cultivations were at the peak Houtian realm.

The Divine Phoenix Island took the Phoenix as their representative Saint Beast. Their legacy cultivation methods also originated from meditating and comprehending the majesty of the phoenix. Because of this, their cultivation methods were more suitable for women, and in their sect, 90% of the disciples were women.



Lin Ming saw the masked woman, and even though her appearance was covered, he was able to recognize that she wasn't Mu Qianyu.

## Chapter 243 – Fairy Maiden Qinghong

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“What was I thinking... ? How could she possibly... ” Lin Ming shook his head, laughing at his own thoughts.

Mu Qianyu was the top-tier fourth-grade sect Divine Phoenix Island's Saintess among Saintess'. In the future, she would become the Sect Master, a fairy maiden that came to Earth who would be respected and admired by countless people. As for him, who hadn't even truly broken through to the Pulse Condensation period, the difference between them was greater than the clouds and mud. Mu Qianyu would probably only think of him if she were bored in her spare time, how could she possibly come to the Seven Profound Valleys and watch such boring matches... ?

In Lin Ming's opinion, a Saintess was probably a figure that would become the successor to the Sect Master, with an extremely honored status. But in fact, he had underestimated her. A Saintess of Divine Phoenix Island was even rarer than a Divine Phoenix Island Sect Master.

Divine Phoenix Island changed Sect Masters every 100 years. Afterwards, they would retire and become an Elder Ancestor. But, a Saintess was rarely seen every 500 years, and not every sect had a Saintess.

The main branch of Divine Phoenix Island was the ancient phoenix family, the Mu Family. The Saintess could only come from the Mu Family. The Mu Family had excessive Yin energy and a lack of Yang energy. Because of this, they had very few children. Although there were many disciples of Divine Phoenix Island

whose last name was Mu, the truth was that this was only a last name, and it didn't mean that they were true juniors of the Mu Family.

Every few hundred years, the Mu Family would produce a girl who had the bloodline of a phoenix descendant, and her talent would be a heaven defying seventh-grade. She was the Saintess. Also, only a Saintess would be able to summon their own Saint Beast. For instance, the Vermillion Bird that the masked woman was riding was not hers. It was left behind by an ancient Saintess who had passed away.

The life of a phoenix descendant was much longer than humans. Some phoenix descendants would continue living on even after their master had died, and stay at Divine Phoenix Island for several hundred years or even 1000 years. Through all these years, Divine Phoenix Island had gathered three Vermilion Birds and a Blue Luan.

One of those Vermillion Birds was Mu Qianyu's Saint Beast. As for the Blue Luan, it was the Saint Beast of her younger sister, Mu Bingyun.

Every time a Saintess would appear every 500 years, there was a small chance that there would be a pair of twin sisters born. That was a Vermillion Bird and a Blue Luan. If this happened, Divine Phoenix Island would enter incomparably prosperous times. If they were able to grasp this opportunity, they might even be able to upgrade themselves to a fifth-grade sect.

“How does Fairy Maiden prefer to be addressed?”

Shi Zongtian stood at the front of the spirit boat leading the way, as the Vermillion Bird slowly followed behind it. The black-clothed masked woman softly said, “My name is Mu Qinghong.”

“I see, so it is Fairy Maiden Qinghong. Please.”

With these words, the spirit boat had already fallen out of sight. Shi Zongtian led Mu Qinghong to the Grand Hall. As for the person from Peacock Mountain, he was forgotten and left on the side. Naturally, Peacock Mountain didn't have anything to say about this. The difference in their strength was an entire grade. Even if the Sovereign of Peacock Mountain was to go to Divine Phoenix Island, he would barely have the qualifications to mix with the Elders. Not only that, he would only be equal to an unimportant Outer Sect Elder.

In a third-grade sect, the Elders were at the Xiantian realm. And there might not even be a Revolving Dan master. If there was, it would be an extremely rare one or two. In a fourth-grade sect, the Elders were at the Revolving Dan realm. This difference was big.

Mu Qinghong and Shi Zongtian sat side by the side on a dais overlooking the square. Mu Qinghong glanced at all the young talent's cultivation and frowned.

“Is there really anyone in this small third-grade sect that is worthy of Qianyu to give such a high evaluation of?” Mu Qinghong muttered to herself.

Mu Qinghong was an orphan. But, since her natural martial talent was amazing, she had been given shelter as a child at Divine Phoenix Island, and she had received the surname of Mu. After Mu Qianyu was chosen as the Saintess of Divine Phoenix Island, Mu Qinghong was assigned to be her assistant.

Mu Qinghong was 19 years older than Mu Qianyu. They had grown up together and the two regarded each other as sisters, their relationship was very solid. A month ago, Mu Qianyu had returned to Divine Phoenix Island and asked Mu Qinghong to go to the Seven Profound Valleys to observe a young boy named Lin Ming, saying that he had a very unusual talent and he could become a Revolving Dan master in the future. Not only that, he wouldn't be any normal Revolving Dan master either. If he were willing to assist Divine Phoenix Island in the future, then the chances of Divine Phoenix Island becoming a fifth-grade sect would be much higher.

This assessment was simply ridiculous. It could said that Mu Qianyu had already thought of Lin Ming as a talent equal to her own.

“Around 15 or 16 years old, and his cultivation can break through to the Pulse Condensation period at any time. His strength far exceeds a martial artist at the same cultivation, and he has an extremely rare martial intent. His body has a strange bloodline that isn't inferior at all to Qianyu's Vermillion Bird bloodline. His body is special, and he has formidable blood vitality. Also, he can control the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder...”

Mu Qinghong was recalling the details that Mu Qianyu had told

her. If this description wasn't wrong, then such a character would be a talent at the pinnacle of any fourth-grade sect.

At this time, the group stages had already started. Mu Qinghong watched for awhile but she didn't spot any thunder-attribute martial artists. She pretended to casually ask, "Valley Master Shi, in these ten stages of outstanding young heroes, which ones came from the sect and which ones came from the 36 countries?"

Mu Qinghong knew that Lin Ming came from Sky Fortune Kingdom. As long as she was able to find out which the competition stage Sky Fortune Kingdom was on, she believed it would be very easy to find Lin Ming.

After hearing Mu Qinghong's question, Shi Zongtian thought it was a bit odd. This woman was simply too interested in the Seven Profound Valley's Martial Meeting, was she looking for someone?

It couldn't possibly be that Divine Phoenix Island came to the Seven Profound Valleys to recruit someone...

It shouldn't be. The disciples with the best talent, such as the Sword Faction's Jiang Baoyun or the Zither Faction's Qin Wuxin, had all grown up in their factions and they had learnt their factions core cultivation methods. If they betrayed their sect to enter Divine Phoenix Island, they would have to switch to the cultivation methods of Divine Phoenix Island. This might do more harm than good.

Also, Divine Phoenix Island's cultivation methods weren't

suitable for men to cultivate.

Although reluctant, Shi Zongtian still described where the martial artists of each stage came from.

“The sixth stage area? It doesn’t look like there’s anything special there...”

At this time at the sixth stage on the martial field, the third round of the Martial Meeting had started already. Huoluo Nation’s Wang Mu was standing on the stage as well as his opponent Zhou Feng, who came from a martial cultivation family.

Zhou Feng’s cultivation was at the peak of Bone Forging. Since he was able to stand on this stage with his peak Bone Forging cultivation, it meant that he was a talent who was able to jump ranks in battle.

“I’ll defeat you in five moves!” Wang Mu shouted as he took his long sword out. He simply didn’t place Zhou Feng in his eyes.

“You talk so much, aren’t you afraid of spitting on your own face? I want to see just how you’ll defeat me!”

Zhou Feng was also an arrogant youth. These words from Wang Mu suddenly caused him to be angry. His opponent was only at the middle Pulse Condensation period, and yet, he was so rampant!

From the very start of the match, Zhou Feng had to resort to

using his final master strike. He understood that defeating someone like Wang Mu would be no easy feat, so he had to go all-out from the get go.

The ultimate move of the Zhou Family had been easily received by Wang Mu. After that, Wang Mu struck out with three sword strokes, forcing Zhou Feng into a perilous situation.

With the fourth sword stroke, Wang Mu broke through the true essence barrier that was protecting Zhou Feng's body.

With the fifth sword stroke, Wang Mu sent Zhou Feng's weapon flying out of his hand. Then, he kicked Zhou Feng in the chest and sent him flying off the stage.

“Third match, Wang Mu wins!’ The referee announced from the side as he gave Wang Mu a few glances. The referee thought that it was quite good for someone from the 36 countries to have such strength. He should be able to advance into the top 100. If a martial artist from the 36 countries was able to advance into the top 100, this was a result that they could be proud of.

After defeating Zhou Feng in five moves, Wang Mu looked at Lin Ming haughtily, provocation stirring in his eyes. “There are a dozen or so matches still left, then it will be time for our match.”

Lin Ming only smiled, not saying anything. He turned his head to glance at the competition's schedule table, and just like Wang Mu had said, their gambling match would begin soon enough.



Lin Ming had heard that Huoluo Nation's Seraphic Pond contained an incomparably pure heaven and earth origin energy. Not only that, but there would be no side effects from soaking in this pond. He was quite looking forward to it.

“Fourth match, Lin Ming against Chen Xiao.”

This would be Lin Ming's first match. His opponent, Chen Xiao, came from the Seven Profound Valley's Array Faction and his cultivation was at the early Pulse Condensation period. In the last Total Faction Martial Meeting, he had reached rank 105.

Although rank 105 didn't sound too impressive, at that time, Chen Xiao had been at peak Bone Forging. Now three years later, his strength had greatly improved from before. And over half of the disciples that had been ahead of him before now were unable to participate in the Total Faction Martial Meeting due to their age. It could be said that this time, Chen Xiao would definitely enter the top 100.

Mu Qinghong was watching this match from afar. So far, this Lin Ming had matched the description of the youth that Mu Qianyu had described. He looked around 16 or 17 years old, and his cultivation was at the peak Bone Forging stage and it might even be enough to enter the Pulse Condensation period.

Mu Qinghong was waiting for Lin Ming to take out his weapon. If it was a spear, then she would be certain. Or, if he used thunder true essence, it would also most certainly confirm her suspicions.

The strength of Lin Ming's opponent was just barely passable in Mu Qinghong's eyes. Well, at least, she could see how Lin Ming would deal with his opponent.

In the stage, Chen Xiao was holding a small array flag, smiling at Lin Ming. "It's already quite good that a peak Bone Forging boy could stand on this stage. But what a pity, you just ran out of luck, the first person you are up against is me."

Chen Xiao didn't even view Lin Ming as an opponent. He was also a talent that could jump up realms to fight opponents, only a middle Pulse Condensation period opponent was worth him giving his all to. As for someone with a lower cultivation than him, it was simply something to be settled in a single move.

"Mm?" Chen Xiao hadn't finished speaking when he saw that Lin Ming had closed his eyes.

What is this fellow doing? Is he looking down on me? Chen Xiao frowned. He wanted to send Lin Ming off stage with a casual move, but seeing Lin Ming's flagrant disrespect, he decided to give Lin Ming a little lesson in humility.

"Match begins!"

As the referee's voice stopped, Chen Xiao immediately flourished his array flag and a succession of symbols circled around in his hand like a liquid rainbow, it was truly mesmerizing. But, as soon as Chen Xiao waved his array flag, the beautiful symbols melted together into a sharp and deadly weapon.

Compared to all the actions that Chen Xiao had taken, Lin Ming simply opened his eyes.

Bang!

Countless visions and images poured into Chen Xiao's mind. His body shook, his pupils lost focus, and then, his body slowly slumped to the ground with a hard plop.

Lin Ming slowly turned around to leave. The audience that had been sitting around the stage were watching in stunned silence.

“Mm? What happened?”

“Did that martial artist called Lin Ming even make a move? His actions were too fast, I wasn't even able to clearly see it.”

“He hadn't moved... he only gave him a look... ”

“How is that possible?”

Because it was the group stages, the sixth group that Lin Ming was in didn't have a direct disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys. Thus, there weren't many people in the audience. Most of the audience were in different areas watching the more famous and well known disciples. As for the audience that was here, their own martial cultivation wasn't too high, so they couldn't see the

mysterious and strange principles that had just occurred.

“It was actually a soul attack...” Mu Qinghong’s slender eyebrows pressed together. Mu Qianyu hadn’t said that Lin Ming was able to use soul attacks. She had been counting on Lin Ming using a spear or thunder true essence, but she didn’t think that Lin Ming would be able to use just a soul attack to achieve victory. Was it possible that Lin Ming’s soul attack was more powerful than his spear play? Or was his opponent not worthy of him using his spear?

# Chapter 244 – Standing Out As An Amazing Talent

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“I see, so that’s the soul force genius that caused an uproar recently,” in the contestant waiting area, a youth with half a silver mask on was sipping a cup of tea, leisurely observing the arena. Watching his demeanor, it was evident that he never placed this group stage in his heart. The mask he wore was very strange, it only covered the right half of his face. But from what was exposed, one could see that he was a handsome man with a feminine and delicate atmosphere.

This masked man did have the qualifications to be proud, his cultivation had reached the late Pulse Condensation period, and he was also a core disciple of the Seven Profound Valley’s Mirage Faction. He was also one of the seeded contestants in the sixth group.

There was an gigantic difference in strength between the core disciples and ordinary disciples of the Seven profound Valleys. A core disciple had outstanding talent, but also had much more resources. Because of this, their strength was usually several times more than an ordinary disciple.

“Oh? Is Big Brother interested in this boy?” A youth beside the masked man asked. The youth was carrying a teapot with an extremely attentive look, ready to refill the tea cup whenever needed.

“He’s not worth me being interested in him. It’s just that I also happen to know how to use a soul attack, and I want to use him to

practice a bit.”

“Big Brother thinks too much of him. For Big Brother to use a soul attack on a peak Bone Forging boy is the same as using a giant knife to kill a chicken.” The youth seized the opportunity to flatter the masked man. This youth was just an ordinary disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys. The resources that the Seven Profound Valleys supplied to their ordinary disciples was much less than a core disciple. Therefore, there were many ordinary disciples that hung on the coattails of core disciples, hoping to obtain some advantages.

“Mm? It’s my turn to go on stage.”

The masked man heard the referee call his name out and he stood up, walking onto the stage. After seeing his match, his eyes brightened.

What luck! The first match that he had was against a quite beautiful woman. Not only that, but she was young, yet her cultivation was decently high. She really was a top quality girl.

“I am the Mirage Faction’s Bi Tinghua. Beautiful lady, will you admit defeat? Or would you like me to help you admit defeat?” Bi Tinghua grinned as he said this. The young girl in front of him was only at the middle Bone Forging stage, her cultivation was an entire realm less than his, how could she possibly be his opponent?

Qin Xingxuan grit her teeth. She didn’t know that her first match would be against such a strong opponent.

“Xingxuan, admit defeat!”

Lin Ming shouted out from outside the stage. Lin Ming had a good estimation of Qin Xingxuan’s strength. At most, she would be able to defeat an early Pulse Condensation period martial artist. If she encountered a middle Pulse Condensation period martial artist, she would still be able to put up a decent fight. But against someone who had reached the late Pulse Condensation period, her chances fell precipitously. Not only that, but he wasn’t regular late Pulse Condensation martial artist either.

Qin Xingxuan let out a light breath, and somewhat grudgingly said, “I admit defeat!”

“Bi Tinghua, victory!” The referee announced.

Qin Xingxuan was a bit dispirited. She had lost without even being able to put up a fight.

Lin Ming gently patted Qin Xingxuan’s shoulder and consoled her, saying, “There’s nothing to be sad about. You’re only 15 years old, you have plenty of time left. In three years time, this stage will be yours.”

“Mm!” Qin Xingxuan nodded, her mood much better.

Bi Tinghua also seemed as if he had some regrets. But then, he looked at Lin Ming and then at Qin Xingxuan and he suddenly

grinned. It seemed like the relationship between these two wasn't so simple. Things were getting much more interesting. Wouldn't it be fun if he could beat the lover of a beautiful girl in front of her?

Bi Tinghua walked off stage and his little attendant immediately walked up with a bright welcoming smile. "Congratulations on your well-deserved victory, Big Brother Tinghua."

"She's just a little girl. It's nothing much if she can't beat me. But, that little girl's talent is quite good. She would be top class if she was placed even in the group of core disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys. She will most likely enter the Total Faction at some time in the future.

As Bi Tinghua thought this the referee announced, "Sixth match, Qian Xiaohu against Ling Sen!"

Qian Xiaohu was the little personal attendant that had been attentively pouring tea for Bi Tinghua. Although this fellow was a sycophantic little suck up, his cultivation was still decent, and he had reached the early Pulse Condensation period. The fact that he was able to pass the mountain gate trial showed that he had some skills.

Qian Xiaohu excitedly stood up as he heard his name being called. "Big brother, It's my turn to go up on stage. This little brother will be right back."

Bi Tinghua was less optimistic about Qian Xiaohu's chances. He glanced at Qian Xiaohu's opponents's cultivation and he was



shocked. Early Bone Forging? Really? How had he managed to pass through the mountain gate trial? Was he a martial artist that excelled in movement techniques?

At the mountain gate trial, martial artists that specialized in movement techniques had a great advantage over martial artists that specialized in other technique. They could stumble their way through even if their true power wasn't optimal.

“Haha, Big Brother, my luck is just too good. I can't believe that I'm able to face an early Bone Forging fellow. Not only that, but he comes from the 36 countries. I think this fellow is probably only good at movement techniques.”

Qian Xiaohu hadn't even got on the stage yet, but he was already imagining his eminent victory. There was an entire cultivation realm between them, and since this person came from the 36 countries, Qian Xiaohu wasn't feeling pressured in the least.

“Match, start!”

The referee's voice had just stopped when Qian Xiaohu rushed forwards, his hands shaped like a tiger's claw. He wanted to end this battle quickly. If he couldn't defeat some lowly early Bone Condensation martial artist from the 36 bumpkin countries with his early Pulse Condensation period cultivation, then he would lose too much face.

This little brother had to prove that he had some value, otherwise, no boss would be willing to keep such a waste of a little

brother around.

Facing Qian Xiaohu's tiger claw, Ling Sen calmly stepped forwards. He hadn't even taken the heavy sword out on his back, when his aura suddenly erupted outwards. Murderous intent spread out as if it were blotting out the sky, and the air on stage immediately began to thicken. The Slaughter Domain had opened!

Qian Xiaohu only saw his surroundings change as he suddenly appeared in a bloody area, facing countless Ashura Devils. These Ashura Devils gave out horrifying shrieks as they started rushing towards him.

Qian Xiaohu had always been a man with a weak mind that sucked up to others, how could his heart of martial arts ever be strong enough to break Ling Sen's Slaughter Domain apart?

Qian Xiaohu's mind was in chaos as he panicked. His swordsmanship was full of holes. In fact, he couldn't even see Ling Sen, there were only countless Ashura Devils surrounding him.

Ling Sen took a casual step towards Qian Xiaohu and sent a punch out.

Bang!

Qian Xiaohu flew backwards until he dropped off stage, still in a confused daze.

“Sixth match, Ling Sen, victory!”

The referee gave Ling Sen a deep glance. To him, Ling Sen was even more surprising than Lin Ming. He was able to substantialize his murderous intent into a domain. The fact that he could use his murderous intent to this degree was simply incredible.

An early Bone Forging martial artist had actually been able to easily defeat an early Pulse Condensation period martial artist. Although Qian Xiaohu's strength was ordinary, he was still a disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys. His strength should be much stronger than an equivalent martial artist from the 36 countries.

The audience was looking around at each other, clueless as to what had just happened. What was going on? Was Qian Xiaohu playacting like some dumb monkey? How come he just watched as his opponent punched him in the face?

Qian Xiaohu climbed back up from the ground, his face pallid as he ran away. He was scared just remembering all those devils surrounding him. He didn't dare face Ling Sen again, it was almost as if he were facing a real Ashura Devil.

“Boss... I...” Qian Xiaohu was still shaken from his experience, he had actually lost to an early Bone Forging martial artist. He was too ashamed to lift his head up.

Bi Tinghua simply ignored Qian Xiaohu, his eyes were only looking at Ling Sen who was still standing on stage. He cupped his

chin. “The martial artists from the 36 countries are more and more interesting. It seems that I’ve been underestimating them.”

The matches would proceed one at a time, and every person would have to face 15 competitors one at a time. Finally, the ones with the highest number of victories would advance. At the 12 match, Lin Ming’s eyes finally brightened, “So there’s actually such a master in the sixth group.”

The sixth group didn’t have a direct disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys. Lin Ming had thought that Bi Tinghua was the strongest one here, but now, he actually saw there that was a true blue master in his group. This young man’s cultivation was at the peak of Pulse Condensation, and not only that, but his aura was extremely shocking, enough to frighten anyone that looked at him. He was like a peerless treasure sword that stood loftily above the stage. His glance was like a sword light that pierced the heart. Even if someone were to look at him, they would have to withstand a great pressure.

“Sword Faction’s Jiang Lanjian! Please advise me!” Jiang Lanjian hands gripped the sword hilt in a polite martial artists duel ceremony. Before this, Jiang Lanjian had been watching the previous matches. In his opinion, even though Lin Ming and Bi Tinghua had shown some promise, neither of them were capable of being his match. Therefore, because he hadn’t seen anything of interest, Jiang Lanjian hadn’t shown up until now.

“P-please... advise me...” Jiang Lanjian’s hapless opponent was an early Pulse Condensation period martial artist from Huoluo Nation. At this point this point in time, the , Huoluo Nation youth

was no more than an eggplant to be beaten up. In his heart, he had already given up.”

“Match, start!”

The referee shouted. The Huoluo Nation disciple hesitated for a moment before finally raising his hand, “I... I admit defeat.”

This youth knew full well that he had already lost, there was no need to further disgrace himself. If the difference in their strength weren't any less, then he would still try and put up a fight to obtain some experience. But now, the difference in their strength had become a moat that stood between them, he would be defeated in a second. If it were like this then he wouldn't be able to learn anything and he might as well save his energy to deal with his next opponent.

“Jiang Lanjian, victory!” The referee announced.

Jiang Lanjian turned around and left the stage. Before leaving, he shot a glance towards Lin Ming, his vision sweeping over him. He didn't pause his steps as he left.

“Although this Jiang Lanjian isn't a direct disciple, his strength isn't too far away from a direct disciple. In terms of battle prowess, the disciples of the Seven Profound Valley's Sword Faction are the strongest within the entire sect. I look forwards to fighting with him...” Lin Ming's heart began to smolder with fighting spirit.

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“21st match, Lin Ming against Wang Mu!”

Finally, it was time for Lin Ming and Wang Mu’s gambling fight to occur. With the referee’s announcement, Qin Ziya and Martial House Master Luo in the audience instantly came to attention. The two of them hadn’t been sitting too far away, and with the announcement from the referee the two middle-aged men looked at each other, a faint smile crossing each of their faces.

Qin Ziya turned his attention towards the martial stage. Martial House Master Luo stroked his chin and said, “I admit that I underestimated Lin Ming. But if he wants to win against Wang Mu, it won’t be so easy. Just you wait and see.”

After Lin Ming had instantly defeated Chen Xiao, he had the potential to reach the top 100. However, Wang Mu still looked at him with contempt in his heart. His cultivation was much higher than that Chen Xiao. Still, he had to be cautious facing Lin Ming lest he end up in a miserable state.

Before the match began, Wang Mu condensed true essence within his body, forming a film of true essence that covered him. To Wang Mu, true essence manifestation skills like this weren’t anything difficult.

“Oh? A true essence shield that can defend against soul attacks? I didn’t think that you would have practiced this sort of technique.”

“Humph. Since I dared to take your bet then I have already figured you out. I already know about the matter in Desert Flower Hall where you used soul force to defeat Ouyang Ziyun and I’ve already figured out how to defend against it!”

## Chapter 245 – A Second To Defeat Wang Mu

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Soul force attacks had especially wonderful results if they were used on an opponent that wasn't aware of the situation. Under the circumstances where the difference in strength and cultivation wasn't too great, one could instantly defeat the other in a single second. But, if one had made early preparations and was aware of the incoming soul attack, then the situation would be different.

However, normal martial artists would never practice this sort of martial skill simply because martial artists that used their soul force to launch an attack were too rare. Only when a martial artist has reached the Xiantian realm and began to cultivate their soul and similar techniques would such attacks surface. Before the Xiantian realm, martial artists usually only cultivated their true essence and physical body.

“Hmm, this is a bit interesting. It seems that Wang Mu already has a martial skill prepared to deal with soul force attacks. How will Lin Ming handle this situation?”

“I don't think that Lin Ming has many other attack methods. Looking at him, he only appears to be 16 or 17 years old. Soul force attacks are too difficult to learn and master. Just cultivating one is enough to occupy all his time; where would he find the energy to study anything else?”

“I hear that Lin Ming was also able to control thunder. I wonder what grade his lightning fusion is at. If it's high, it might be of some use.”



As people talked, Lin Ming and Wang Mu had already both risen to prominence. They had attracted many viewers; there were even some audience members and martial artists from other stages that came to watch. It was basically determined that Lin Ming and Wang Mu would both qualify. In the future, they might encounter one of these two, so it was better to come watch in advance and have an understanding of their opponents strength.

....

In the arena, the match had already begun. But, Wang Mu actually hadn't moved yet. Instead, he strengthened his defensive turtle shell.

"Now that your soul force attacks no longer work, I wonder how you will fight me!" Wang Mu brutishly spit out.

"I see you crammed your study time in order to learn a soul defense; you seem quite confident." Lin Ming still hadn't taken out his spear. Since everyone had assumed that he was a soul force attack genius, then he would just go with the flow. He had already decided that unless he met a master which soul force was useless against, then he would use the Samsara martial intent as his only attack; this wasn't just to hide his strength. If he constantly uses his Samsara martial intent, then he would be able to deepen the understanding of his Samsara martial intent and gain a higher realm of comprehension.

Lin Ming was becoming closer and closer to the Houtian and Xiantian realm. Sooner or later, Lin Ming would have to cultivate his soul. If he waited until then to ponder and understand how the

Samsara martial intent was related to his soul, then it would be too late. So, if he was given an opportunity to practice his Samsara martial intent, of course he wouldn't miss it.

Wang Mu's face flushed red. He coldly snorted, "Even if I don't have a soul defense, I can still crush you with my cultivation. I'm not afraid of you!"

As his voice fell, Wang Mu took out two swords from his spatial ring. He gripped a longsword in his right hand and a dagger in his left.

"Dual blade user?"

The audience's eyes lit up. They hadn't thought that Wang Mu would be a dual blade user. Before this, Wang Mu had only fought with his left hand. To use two blades was much more difficult than a single sword, but once one managed to master this power, then they would be a force to be reckoned with.

"The two blade styles combine and complement each other!"

Wang Mu's true essence began to rapidly revolve within his body. A deep purple color glimmered around the longsword and the dagger, as light glinted off the tip.

Wang Mu took a fierce step forwards and his long sword thrust out followed with his dagger, a piercing sound breaking through the air.

Seeing Wang Mu's blades stab out, Lin Ming remained motionless. His eyes suddenly flashed with a black light.

The Samsara martial intent had begun.

Bang!

Wang Mu felt as if his body were struck by a powerful force. The sword wind that was twirling around his blades scattered into nothing with the loss of his soul force supporting it.

Wang Mu paled as he stepped back, his heart filled with a surprised anger. His opponents soul force was simply like a sword light. Although it had managed to penetrate his soul force defense, it had been greatly weakened in the process. Even so, it had caused his spiritual sea to tremble. In that instant, he had seen countless illusions and had almost lost himself in that imaginary vortex.

And worst of all, once his spiritual sea was struck then he wouldn't be able to control his true essence. Any gorgeous or magnificent martial skill that he was using would be wasted.

"I have to strengthen my soul force defense, but my true essence is limited. If I strengthen my soul force defense, then my attack power will naturally weaken along with it. If I don't have enough true essence, can I still use that move?"

"At this point I don't have any other choice." Wang Mu grit his

teeth and pushed his true essence to the extreme. The two blades in his hands began to rotate at an astonishing speed.

“Double Blade Vortex!”

True essence formed an air current that began to swirl around the blades. A black vortex emerged from between the two swords, recklessly spinning as it grew larger and larger. A foul evil and cold air began to whisper in the wind, constantly emanating from that vortex.

However, when Wang Mu was about to strike out with this double bladed vortex, he was completely stunned as he watched the audience around him melt into nothingness. The skies evaporated and the ground vanished; he was suddenly a single person standing in an endless empty space. In the sky, there were two massive jet black vortexes that were savagely swirling around. When Wang Mu looked at these vortexes, it was as if he could see the profound void and the endless universe contained within.

Compared to these to titanic black vortexes, his own double sword vortex was absolutely nothing.

In that moment, a glimmer of dread and anguish appeared in Wang Mu’s mind.

In a battle of soul force, a single momentary flaw in the mind would spell instant defeat.

Peng!

Wang Mu's soul force defense film completely broke apart. Countless shadows and images flooded into Wang Mu's mind, surging through his spiritual sea, completely cutting off all his contact with the outside world.

Peng!

Peng!

With the sound of metal hitting stone, both of Wang Mu's blades fell to the ground. His eyes dilated, his pupils blurred over, his face whitened, he foamed from the mouth, and a moment later, he slumped to the ground.

In this duel, he had been thoroughly defeated.

Seeing Wang Mu's defeat, Martial House Master Luo's expression became extremely ugly. Qin Ziya cupped his hands together and smiled as he sent a true essence sound transmission, saying, "Thank you Martial House Master Luo for so generously gifting us with the Seraphic Pond. It was a good game."

Although the words sounded polite they were actually full of sarcasm, grating on Martial House Master Luo's ears as he heard them. Wang Mu had been defeated with only having used half a skill! But Lin Ming actually hadn't moved at all, he had only glanced at Wang Mu twice.

How was this possible? How could a peak Bone Forging boy defeat someone at the middle Pulse Condensation period? Not only that, but Wang Mu wasn't any ordinary middle Pulse Condensation martial artist. Even in the entire Seven Profound Valleys there weren't many people that could do this. Just what was this Lin Ming's soul talent at?

Medium sixth-grade? Or maybe a superior sixth-grade that was only spoken of in the ancient texts?

A sixth-grade soul talent was much rarer than a sixth-grade martial talent. To have a superior-sixth grade soul talent was simply unimaginable!

“Lin Ming, victory!”

The referee promptly announced. After defeating Wang Mu, Lin Ming was already at the front of his group. He was only behind Jiang Lanjian and Bi Tinghua. It was already certain that he would pass the group stages.

“This Lin Ming is simply too terrifying; he was actually able to defeat a middle Pulse Condensation period martial artist with just his soul force. Could he do the same with a late Pulse Condensation period martial artist?”

“Late Pulse Condensation....it should be impossible....even a top-level talent of the Seven Profound Valleys could not do this. Even the direct disciples of the Total Faction would not be able to defeat

a late Pulse Condensation period master when only at the peak of Bone Forging.”

“Well, it’s different. After all, he is a soul force attack expert. It simply isn’t the right path to walk to use such skills. Although it has a great effect now, later it will create a very big bottleneck, especially after the Xiantian realm when everyone begins to cultivate their soul. At that time, others’ soul force won’t be much weaker, rendering his soul attacks useless.”

“They would have to reach the Xiantian realm first. How many of the geniuses present would be able to reach the Xiantian realm? 1 out of 20? 1 out of 30? In any case, I’m not prepared to deal with this abnormal freak. If I run into him, I’ll just admit defeat. Since I’m only at the early Pulse Condensation period, chances are, I will also be defeated in a second. I’ll save my strength to deal with someone else.

This thought of the Seven Profound Valley disciple was also what most of the other martial artists were thinking. There were a total of 10 that could leave this group. Most of them weren’t sure that they would be able to deal with Lin Ming, so they could only forfeit their match if they encountered him,.

.....

In the Profound Sky Mountain’s Great Hall, Mu Qinghong had been watching the entire match from afar.

She had already determined that this soul attack youth was Lin

Ming, the young boy that Qianyu had spoken about. Unless Lin Ming hadn't come to participate in the Seven Profound Valley's Total Faction Martial Meeting.

“This Lin Ming still hasn't used a weapon, and neither has he conjured any of his thunder true essence. It seems he's preparing to reach first place in his group.

Mu Qinghong had seen that there were a few Seven Profound Valley disciples in Lin Ming's group that were decent. It wouldn't be easy for Lin Ming to defeat them with his young 16 years of age.

“He's so young and yet he gives off a mystifying aura, as if I'm looking into a deep well. Even though Qianyu described him, I still don't know just how many cards he has in his hand....

.....

At this time, Sky Fortune Kingdom's Seven Profound Martial House –

The semi-annual Martial House entrance examination had just ended, and a group of lucky fellows had entered the Seven profound martial House. These lucky ones could be described as the favored talents of heaven, flushed with success. As long as nothing went wrong, they would be able to do many great things after they graduated. They could join the army and be a commander, or, if they didn't want to join the army, they could stay in their respected families and serve as great political figures.



Regardless of what path they chose, they had won glory for their family. Not only that, but they would also have a ridiculously high income. A normal family could struggle for an entire year, performing hard labor and only earn 10 or so gold taels, but these talents would be able to relax and earn several hundred taels of gold per year.

Thinking of their future livelihood full of abundance, these young disciples that had grown up under the aura of being a genius couldn't restrain their smug smiles.

According to the rules, the new disciples of the Martial House needed to visit the Ten Thousand Killing Array and the Ranking Stone under the guidance of their new instructor. This allowed them to see the top-ranking talents and also motivate them to practice well.

Before they reached the Ranking Stone, they saw that many people had gathered at a temple-like building; it was completely bustling with activity. At the side of this temple, there was also an expensive and well-dressed young man sitting at the side of the building as if he was waiting for something.

“What is that?” A 16 year-old young female disciple asked as she pointed at the weird looking altar in the middle of the temple. The middle of the altar was surrounded with exquisitely beautiful and sparkling crystal stones. “What beautiful crystals.”

The young girl's eyes shone.

“What crystal? Are you an idiot? That’s a true essence stone. It’s a pure true essence stone worth 1000 gold taels!” Many of the Martial House disciples came from large and respected families so they had extraordinary natural insight into these mysterious objects.

“1000 gold taels...with so many, that has to be several tens of thousands of gold taels! The young girl clutched her gasping mouth. In the ordinary world, a common family only earned 10 gold taels of income per year. But now, there was an astronomical figure of several tens of thousands of gold taels; it was a number she couldn’t understand.

“Mmm....I wonder what sort of array formation will use so many true essence stones. This is just too luxurious.....” The youth who spoke pursed his lips. Although he came from a large family, he was still distressed seeing so many true essence stones used in an array formation.

“It’s a sound transmission array.” At this time, a middle-aged instructor opened his mouth to speak. “It’s a sound transmission array to deliver a message from the Seven Profound Valleys Total Faction. The array is separated by several hundred thousand miles. In order to transmit one message it will consume 36 true essence stones.

“What!? It takes that many true essence stones to send a message?” Even those disciples that came from large families were startled beyond compare. A message that was worth several tens of thousands of gold taels? What a joke!

What sort of news was this? Could only an Emperor listen to it?

## Chapter 246 – Hope

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“Instructor, what sort of news is worth 36 true essence stones to send? Is it a combat report from the frontline battlefield?” The youth who asked came from a military family. In his opinion, only a combat report of Sky Fortune Kingdom was worth spending 36 true essence stones on. After all, victory or defeat in war was related to the destiny of a nation.”

The middle-aged instructor shook his head and said, “A frontline combat report wouldn’t use a sound transmission array. Our Seven Profound Martial House isn’t a messenger for Sky Fortune Kingdom.”

A sound transmission array formation that could pass a message through several hundred thousand miles wasn’t something that could simply be created on a whim. Not even Sky Fortune Kingdom’s Imperial Palace could hope to ever construct something like this.

“Then what sort of news is being sent?” The young boys and girls eyes were filled with curiosity. They were at the age where they were intensely inquisitive into all things.

“This transmission array will send a victory report from the Total Faction Martial Meeting. It will be sent tonight,” The middle-aged instructor replied.

“Mm....Total Faction Martial Meeting?” Most disciples face were filled with befuddlement; none of them knew what that was. After

all, the common person was rarely exposed to such a high-level existence. Even the Seven Profound Valleys that stood behind the Seven Profound Martial House was an incomparably vague concept. They simply didn't know just how strong the Seven Profound Valleys actually were.

“The Seven Profound Valleys set up a Total Faction Martial Meeting and gathered the talents of all the countries together to compare their strengths.” Although the middle-aged instructor knew that this wouldn't make much sense to these new disciples nor did it matter to them, he still patiently explained it.

“Oh? The geniuses of all the countries gather together?” As a youth heard this, his eyes suddenly shone. He was the first place candidate of this time's entrance examination – the freshman disciple named Huayu. Huayu also came from a large, respected family, and at 15 years old, his cultivation was at the Viscera Training stage; his strength as quite alright. When the middle-aged teacher had said that the talents of all the countries would gather together, Huayu felt incomparably enthusiastic, burning with fighting spirit. He said, “Instructor, when can I participate? What rank would I be able to get?”

The middle-aged instructor didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. He said, “You can't go....”

“Why?” Huayu felt as if he had been slapped. He was the number one candidate in the Seven Profound Martial House entrance examination. He could be considered the most talented young martial artist of Sky Fortune Kingdom within the last half year. With such a proud and worthy title, how could he not even

participate?

The middle-aged instructor sighed with poignancy. This youth was merely a superior fourth-grade talent. Only if he was an inestimable surprise like Ling Sen or Lin Ming would he ever be able to reach the level needed to contact the Total Faction.

He didn't want to ruin to the youths self-confidence, so he tried a different tactic. "Do you see that well-dressed man in the robe near the transmission array?"

"Mm? I see." Huayu turned his head and saw in man in a brocaded robe. He was sitting in a mahogany chair near the altar and was looking a bit anxious at the moment.

"He is the current dynasty's Crown Prince. News from the Total Faction Martial Meeting will only arrive during the evening, yet it is only noon and he's waiting here. Do you know what this means?"

"What? Crown Prince!?"

"His Highness the Crown Prince!? He is the current dynasty's Crown Prince!?"

All of the youths gasped in complete and utter surprise, their eyes wide with incredulity as if they couldn't believe their eyes. To the common people, the Crown Prince was a legendary figure they had only ever heard about.

The Crown Prince was waiting here even though the news came in the evening. Not only that, but the price of the transmission array was 36 pure true essence stones. All of these implied just how important this news was!

This also meant that this unknown Total Faction Martial Meeting had an extraordinary significance!

The middle-aged instructor let out a sigh. He didn't envy these heavenly favored talents when there was the grand stage where countless talents that were above them reigned; that was the true world. Casually choosing any one of these talents was like taking a small rock from a giant mountain of stones.

“Do you understand now? This Total Faction Martial Meeting is grander than you can imagine. All of the talents, geniuses and young heroes from all the countries and numerous martial families will gather in the Seven Profound Valley's Total Faction. It is simply impossible for you to stand on that stage! Let alone you, even the core disciples of the Martial House cannot. There are many inferior fifth-grade talents and medium fifth-grade talents that have no hope of going.”

“Not even a medium fifth-grade talent has a chance?” Huayu was shocked. To say it more directly, he was only a superior fourth-grade talent. A fifth-grade talent was only born once a decade in the entire Sky Fortune Kingdom. In his opinion, this kind of existence would simply be a son of god.

“But....since this tournament is so important, then how come we’ve never heard of it?” Huayu asked the question that all the other new disciples were wondering. If this Martial Meeting were truly so grand, how come no one had ever heard of it before?

The middle-aged instructor explained, “That is because, in all these years, this Martial Meeting had held no significance for our Sky Fortune Kingdom. Every three years, the Seven Profound Martial House will send out 5 disciples to participate in this tournament. However, usually four out of the five sent would come from the four martial families that live on the edge of Sky Fortune Kingdom. Every so often, even all five of them would come from the four martial families, and our Sky Fortune Kingdom would have no share in participating.”

“I had said that even a medium fifth-grade talent may not necessarily participate in the Martial Meeting. It’s the same for the other countries and martial families too. Our Sky Fortune Kingdom only produces a fifth-grade talent every 10 years. They do have a large chance of participating, but....”

The middle-aged instructor paused here, and shook his head before continuing, “That is only in terms of filling the quota of people that we send. Actually, there is a mountain gate trial that most cannot even pass, and they are eliminated from the Martial Meeting. A few years ago, the four martial families produced a disciple named Mu Yinzhou who managed to reach the top 100. That was the most joyous and proud moment for our Seven Profound Martial House. However, that was only the pride of the Martial House and the pride of the four great martial families. It had nothing to do with our Sky Fortune Kingdom.



A martial family wouldn't necessarily only have a single last name. A child would follow their father's last name, and if a daughter were to marry someone else, her children would follow her husband's last name. Mu Yinzhou was talented because he had the bloodline of his father, a wandering martial artist that roamed the world and wasn't a Sky Fortune citizen.

An outer disciple inevitably could not compare to someone in the martial family that shared the main lineage. Even Mu Yinzhou couldn't be considered a true member of the four great martial families.

“Proud to reach the top 100? Our Sky Fortune Kingdom has so many talents, how can they not reach the top 100? How many countries participate in the Total Faction martial Meeting?”

“It's not a question of how many countries participate. It's that our Sky Fortune Kingdom has simply too wide a gap compared to those ancient and glorious martial families and sects. When the disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys are at your age, it's only considered extremely ordinary to have a cultivation at the peak of Altering Muscle.

“Eh....” Huayu stared with wide eyes. He hadn't yet reached 16 years old and his cultivation was at middle Viscera Training stage. This was already considered very good, good enough that even the Family Head had praised him. But....peak Altering Muscle at 15 years of age? What sort of concept was that? And that was only ordinary? Was this some sort of joke? Was he lying?

The middle-aged instructor sighed, “It's shameful to say this, but

the last time someone born from the Sky Fortune Kingdom had reached the top 100 rankings was 50 or 60 years ago. Even having someone pass the mountain gate trial was 15 years ago. This was truly shameful for our Sky Fortune Kingdom, and also for our Seven Profound Martial House! I am an instructor of the Martial House who was born in Sky Fortune Kingdom, and even I feel disgraced just mentioning this subject. That is why I didn't wish to speak of the Total Faction Martial Meeting."

While conversing, they had finally arrived before the Ranking Stone. Gazing up, they could view the numerous names engraved upon the large Ranking Stone. These were the talents of Sky Fortune Kingdom's Seven Profound Martial House.

The higher one's ranking, the larger their name would be. The first row only had one name – Lin Ming.

Following closely behind Lin Ming were Ling Sen and Ta Ku. In another half month, these three names would be removed from this Ranking Stone. Ling Sen and Ta Ku would graduate, and Lin Ming would become a core disciple.

Thinking this, the middle-aged instructor felt very melancholic. Lin Ming was once his student. Although he had only taught him for a few days, Lin Ming was the most outstanding and wonderful student that he had ever taught in his entire life; it had left a deep and profound impression on him.

"Lin Ming! It's Lin Ming!"

“Wow, I’m so excited! I can actually see the name of my idol in first place!”

“That’s right, Instructor Hong, did Mister Lin Ming participate in this year’s Total Faction Martial Meeting?”

The name of Lin Ming resounded like thunder in the ears of these young martial artists. He was without a doubt the utter and complete inspiration of those in every youthful martial arts circle. These young boys and girls couldn’t help but ask this question.

“He participated! Of course he participated!”

Hong Xi took a deep breath, and his somewhat disconsolate eyes began to suddenly shine with a flashing and glorious brilliance, like a sleeping lion that had woken up.

“Can Lin Ming reach the top 100?” A young girl whispered.

“Of course he can, he definitely will! Not only will he reach the top 100, but he will reach the top 50, even the top 30!” Hong Xi subconsciously gripped his fists, his emotions surging like the tide. It was like the one participating in the Total Faction Martial Meeting wasn’t Lin Ming, but himself. In Lin Ming, he had placed all his hopes.

His eyes shifted towards the direction of the Seven Profound Valleys. Across all those endless miles and rivers and valleys, Lin Ming and his group of three had enormous hopes placed upon

them. This wasn't only the hope of the instructors within the Seven Profound Martial House, but was also the hope of all the generations of martial artists within Sky Fortune Kingdom.....

.....

When the third round began, Lin Ming met with three forfeits. It was not only him, but also Jiang Lanjian and Bi Tinghua who had opponents admitting defeat as the match started. In the group stages, one only had to be in the top ten to advance; there was no need to fight in every match.

Then, it was time for lunch.

Lin Ming, five matches, five victories.

Ling Sen, five matches, five victories.

Qin Xingxuan's luck was quite bad. She had already lost three matches. Her chances of qualifying for the next stage were becoming increasingly precarious.

Although she had long expected this result, and knew that the main reason she lost was not because of her talent but because of her age, Qin Xingxuan still felt a bit disappointed. During this Martial Meeting, her journey would most likely end at the group stages. But three years from now, this would become her stage.

After five matches, Lin Ming had already gained some fame. As

for Ling Sen, the matches he had met were a bit weaker, so his fame was also correspondingly smaller.

There were some people trying to take advantage of the situation and were beginning to estimate the future rankings; they had even opened up gambling houses.

The Seven Profound Valleys would not interfere in this. In fact, the ones that opened these gambling houses were usually the children of the Elders; their backgrounds weren't small. For them, the gambling house was merely a pleasurable pastime. It was difficult to judge the strength of a participant in the group stages, so the gambling house wouldn't necessarily make any profit.

During lunch time, Qin Xingxuan smiled at Lin Ming and praised, "Lin Ming, you're chosen as one of the seeded players in the gambling house. Your odds aren't too bad."

"Oh? What are my odds of winning the whole thing?" Lin Ming casually asked. If the compensation rate was good, he might consider placing a bet on himself.

"Uh, well....you have....um, no odds of winning the championship...." Qin Xingxuan didn't think that the first question Lin Ming would ask was what his rates were for winning the entire Martial Meeting. Even her, who had utter faith in Lin Ming, wasn't very optimistic in Lin Ming's chances of winning the championship.

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# Chapter 247 – Out Of The Group Stages And Into The Top 100!

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It was true that Lin Ming was strong. However, the several direct disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys were simply too terrifying. They were all at the peak of Pulse Condensation – an entire realm of cultivation higher than Lin Ming. Not only that, but they were also talents that were able to jump ranks in combat; they were stronger than an ordinary middle Houtian realm master.

No matter how fierce Lin Ming was, it was simply impossible for him to cross almost two realms in order to fight with a middle Houtian realm master. If it was possible, then it would perturb the entire Seven Profound Valleys.

Qin Xingxuan said, “There were 20 candidates that were selected as possible champions. These are almost all of the Seven Profound Valley core disciples, as well as the most popular seeded participants in the 10 groups. Jiang Lanjian is also a choice, and his compensation rate is 1:20. There is also someone from a martial cultivation family who has been selected, Zhang Yanzhao, and his compensation rate is 1:35.

Zhang Yanzhao?

Lin Ming felt that this name was someone familiar. He thought back and recalled that during the ruckus in Desert Flower Hall, one of Ouyang Ziyun’s minions had mentioned this name. Zhang Yanzhao from the Zhang Family had managed to reach the top 20 in the last Total Faction Martial Meeting! But, compared to the top 10 ranking Seven Profound Valley direct disciples, the difference

was simply too great. This time he had practiced for three years and hoped to attain success with his hard work.

Ever since the Seven Profound Valleys had started to hold their Total Faction Martial Meeting, the first place champion had always been won by a Seven Profound Valleys core disciple; it had never fallen into the hand of outsiders. It was already quite good that Zhang Yanzhao had been selected as one of the 20 possible champions and could obtain a 1:35 compensation rate.

“Yes....did you say I was selected as a seeded participant?” Lin Ming asked.

“Um....you had just been selected as one of the seeded players in the 36 countries. But, you have to place first within all the disciples of the 36 countries. There are 7 chosen candidates; your compensation rate is 1:6.

“1:6? It seems my compensation rate isn’t that high. I shouldn’t be in the front of the ranks right?”

:Mm. The ones with the highest rank in the 36 countries are the brother sister pair from Grace Venerate Nation. Both of them have a cultivation of the middle Pulse Condensation period, and are about to enter into the late Pulse Condensation period. Both of their odds are 1:2.

“Grace Venerate Nation....” Because their countries were too far away, Lin Ming had never seen this country and had only heard some rumors. Grace Venerate Nation was an extremely mysterious



country, and it's land mass was smaller than the Sky Fortune Kingdom. However, their power was even greater than Huoluo Nation.

Lin Ming recalled this for a moment. He grinned at Qin Xingxuan and said, "Xingxuan, if you want to win some money to eat at Desert Flower Hall, then you can bet on me."

"Haha....well, the truth is I already placed 20 true essence stones on you..." Qin Xingxuan mumbled, somewhat embarrassed. This was only a scenario that she had speculated would happen. Although Lin Ming might not be able to become the champion, Qin Xingxuan had absolute faith in him that he could easily dispatch the brother and sister pair from Grace Venerate Nation. Up to now, Lin Ming still hadn't used his spear.

.....

After lunch, the afternoon round of matches would begin. The match schedule had been specifically arranged; there were no lots that were drawn. The reasoning behind this was so that the seeded players did not meet in the group matches, and that martial artists from similar families would be placed as far away from each other as possible.

Each of the 21 individuals in Lin Ming's group had to fight a total of 15 matches. This was so that the top 30 seeded players would be able to stagger each other.

Lin Ming had managed to not encounter Bi Tinghua, Jiang

Lanjian, Ling Sen, or Qin Xingxuan. There were too many forfeits that occurred in the afternoon matches so Lin Ming hadn't really faced anyone. That was, until his seventh round where Lin Ming encountered a middle Pulse Condensation period martial artist who was his opponent. This was a disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys Refiner Faction, Sun Dong.

Sun Dong's cultivation was at the middle Pulse Condensation period, and he already had quite good results in the group stage. It shouldn't be too difficult for him to pass the group stages. Not only that, but as a disciple of the Refiner Faction, he was especially skilled in defend against and restrain soul force attack martial artists.

Sun Dong very confidently walked onto the stage. On top of his head, a three foot large furnace was twirling around.

"You are quite strong, but it won't be easy to defeat me. Although my Seven Profound Valleys Refiner Faction disciples aren't that skilled in martial skills and cultivation methods, but in terms of soul force power, our strength is far beyond that of ordinary martial artists! Your soul attacks are simply useless against me!

A refining master and an inscription master were basically the same; both of them needed accurate and precise control of soul force. Sun Dong was a medium fifth-grade soul talent and had also cultivated a soul law formula since he was a child in order to refine and build up his soul force. The power of his soul force could be imagined.

"Haha, I'm really looking forwards to this. Although Sun Dong

isn't too strong, he just happens to be someone that is able to counter Lin Ming. Soul attacks shouldn't work against him. I wonder what other methods Lin Ming still has."

"Hehe, it's time that this Lin Ming will taste the suffering of defeat. I can't wait to see his winning streak ended.

Lin Ming had swept away and defeated many masters of the Seven Profound Valleys. Since there were many Total Faction disciples in the audience, they naturally hoped that Lin Ming would lose a match; they were simply jealous of someone that could remain undefeated in the group stages. Not to mention, this young upstart youth actually came from the 36 countries. This was just like a poor boy that had climbed on a royal's head; this made people feel unhappy.

"Let me show you the secrets of our Refiner Faction! Stable Tripod Universe!"

Sun Dong gave a loud shout and the small black furnace above his head began to spin around in the wind. In a blink of an eye it had instantly enlarged by several feet.

After true essence was poured into the furnace, it simply had an unimaginable force. It could even shatter a small hill or mountain top.

Lin Ming didn't bother paying attention to whatever it was that Sun Dong was doing. Instead, his eyes flashed with a black light; the Samsara martial intent surged outwards.

Peng!

Sun Dong paled as if he had been struck hard. Because the three feet large furnace in the air had lost the support of soul force and true essence, it pounded into the ground and broke apart the tiles.

“Damn, how could this happen. My soul force is so strong, how was he able to injure me?” Sun Dong thought as he gasped for breath, a hand held up against his face to support himself.

“Furnace Shattering 10,000 Voids!” Sun Dong’s eyes flashed, and the black furnace began to wildly spin around again. This time, it had only flown a few feet when it suddenly crashed into the floor.

Lin Ming’s eyes flashed with a black light again. Sun Dong’s body shook once more, then his eyes lost all focus and he slumped onto the ground.

“Lin Ming, victory!”

After the referee’s announcement, the entire audience was stunned silent. Even the Refiner Faction’s Sun Dong had been defeated. Not only that, but he had been defeated so easily. How could this be?

Wang Mu’s defeat was surprising to some, but this was still an acceptable outcome. The reasoning for this was that Lin Ming’s soul force was simply too monstrously abnormal, and was able to

equal someone at the middle Pulse Condensation period. But, Sun Dong was a refining master whose attacks used soul force. How could he also suffer a similar fate like Wang Mu?

Just what sort of background did this Lin Ming fellow have?

Many of the Seven Profound Valley disciples that were watching from the audience suddenly felt chills crawl down their spines. Lin Ming had used his soul force to defeat opponents one after another. Regardless of an opponent's cultivation or how their soul force was, the matches had been resolved within the space of a few breaths. Lin Ming's soul force attacks gave those watching a completely mystical and unfathomable feeling!

The truth was, although Lin Ming's Samsara martial intent was approximately a soul attack, it wasn't only a soul attack.

The Samsara martial intent that he been born out of the will within one's heart was in itself an attack on a martial artists' heart of martial arts. If one didn't have a firm and steady heart of martial arts, then it would be very simple for them to become lost in the 100 Samsaras.

Even though a martial artist could have a powerful soul force, that didn't imply that their heart was firm.

Therefore one wouldn't be able to ignore the Samsara martial intent attack just by virtue of a strong soul force.

The Samsara martial intent could only be seen by those it was used against. Only those people would be able to see the mysterious secrets within. Others would find it too difficult to understand the profound secrets and truths hidden within. As for those who had been overwhelmed by the countless visions and images, they had quickly lost consciousness after. In the end, it was difficult to say just what sort of attacks had been used.

However, at this time at the Grand Hall, Mu Qinghong noticed that there was something peculiar about Lin Ming's soul attack. As for what it was, she would only ever be able to judge it if she personally experienced an attack.

"This youth is becoming more and more interesting. Maybe Qianyu's talk wasn't so exaggerated as I thought.

The corners of Mu Qinghong's lips curved up. She was glad that she hadn't made this trip in vain.

The group stages were tepid; it was quite boring. There simply weren't any showdowns between the true heavy weights. In half the matches, the result had been decided just by one's cultivation.

Finally, Ling Sen and Bi Tinghua's match was about to happen. It attracted the attention of many people.

Ling Sen, 21 years old, cultivation of early Bone Forging.

Bi Tinghua, 19 years old, cultivation of late Pulse Condensation.

From the very start of the match, Ling Sen activated his Slaughter Domain. He knew quite well that Bi Tinghua would be the strongest opponent that he had faced so far.

Fu!

Bi Tinghua felt a bit dizzy as the scenery around him changed. In the next moment, he had been transported to a blood hell. He saw the endless gray rocks, as well as the countless devils that were climbing out of the ninth layer of the abyss.

Bi Tinghua wickedly smiled.

“Illusion? I am from the Mirage Faction!

Bi Tinghua’s mouth arced in a smile. Bi Tinghua pinched his hands, and suddenly an endless pillar of fire descended from the heavens. With the roaring combustion sound of the flames, these devils had been turned into ashes.

The flame kept growing larger and hotter. Suddenly, the flame began to break the rocks and even set the sky ablaze. This inferno was an illusion formed by Bi Tinghua. In the illusionary world, Bi Tinghua was god!

Peng!

The Slaughter Domain was shattered. Lin Sen's face whitened to the color of bone.

Bi Tinghua smiled as he looked down on Ling Sen. "You are not my match."

"Thousand-hand Bright Buddha!"

Bi Tinghua's palm struck out. Soon, countless images of Bi Tinghua's hand began to form a series of illusory phantoms. Bi Tinghua's phantom palms increased until they began to blot out the entire sky.

Ling Sen gave a loud shout and took out his heavy sword. His body's true essence revolved the utter limit, and he cut down with his sword in a counter attack.

Peng!

The sword wind was shattered. The bricks underneath Ling Sen's foot had been turned into stone powder. With a stuffy snort, he knelt down as he was. The true essence surrounding his body had been scattered, and he had received a heavy wound.

"Bi Tinghua, victory!"

The referee that announced his also felt that there wasn't anything unusual about this match; the cultivation of the two had simply been too different. If Ling Sen had been able to win, then



that would be the most shocking event in the entire Seven Profound Valleys.

Ling Sen had completely lost. Not only that, but he didn't even have the qualifications to force Bi Tinghua to use his true ability.

After Ling Sen and Bi Tinghua's match was over, there were very few matches remaining that were worth paying attention to. Most of Lin Ming's matches had forfeited. If it continued like this, he would easily pass the group stages.

Bi Tinghua and Jiang Lanjian had qualified with the same undefeated score.

Qin Xingxuan was off by two wins. Her journey in this Martial Meeting was halted in the group stages.

Ling Sen won 12 and lost 3. His results in group six qualified him to cross into the next stages.

Although this result was ordinary, it was quite good if compared to Ling Sen's low early Bone Forging cultivation. It was only because Ling Sen was 21 and had missed the best times of his youth to cultivate. His cultivation speed had always been his weakness; it was the limiter that prevented Ling Sen from entering into the top-tier of talents.

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“It’s sunset. The victory report should be arriving any moment now.

In the Sky Fortune Kingdom, the Seven Profound Valley’s sound transmission array had already opened. There were 36 pure true essence stones splendidly placed on the array disk.

At this time, many important people had arrived around the sound transmission array. There were several Seven Profound Martial House Elders, Ta Ku and other important disciples of the Seven Profound Martial House, and also several nobles of Sky Fortune Kingdom.

Today was the day that the group matches were finished, so they were waiting for the victory report to arrive.

## Chapter 248 – The Second Round Begins

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The snow fluttered in the falling light and the icy wind was chilling to the bone. Crown Prince Yang Lin had a thick golden-purple cloak draped over his body, he was waiting patiently on a thick wooden chair.

The truth was that Yang Lin didn't have to stay here to listen to the message as it came. As long as the Total Faction Martial Meeting victory report arrived, thousands of sound transmitting talismans would instantly light up and the report would be sent to important figures of all the great power players. Tomorrow, the national newspaper of Sky Fortune City would publish the results.

The reason that Yang Lin personally insisted on waiting here was besides Qin Ziya, there was no one else that was more concerned about Lin Ming's results than him.

His destiny had already been tightly bound together with Lin Ming. Now that Ouyang Dihua was dead, as long as Lin Ming's influence increased just a little bit, his chances of winning the throne were that much higher.

Outside the temple, there were many disciples of the Seven Profound Martial House waiting, many of them being the new disciples that had entered the Seven Profound Martial House through the entrance exam. The words that Instructor Hong Xi had said to them had left a very deep and shocking impression on their young minds, and they had braved the chilling cold to stand here because they believed that they would be able to witness a historic moment.

The results from the Total Faction Martial Meeting wasn't only related to the glory of Sky Fortune Kingdom's Martial House, it also had a very important political significance and it represented the power of the country's martial artists. The dazzling successes of the young martial artists was a manifestation of the nation's strength. If they could reach a result that was up to the standards of the Seven Profound Valleys, the Seven Profound Valleys would also increase the resources allotted to Sky Fortune Kingdom.

Although the Seven Profound Valleys was a blood sucking vampire, they weren't completely merciless or without foresight. If a country could prove its value, then the Seven Profound Valleys would be willing to help elevate it. For instance, Huoluo Nation, Grace Venerate Nation, and some of the 16 martial cultivation families like the Zhang Family were like this.

In summary, the Seven Profound Valleys would use their resources in a way to maximize efficiency. It would not waste any resources on the weak and the wasted.

In the sunset of early winter, the clouds were thick in the sky, and the dark night fell sooner. There were some maids near the altar that had lit candle lamps under the shade. In such cold weather, these maids that had no martial cultivation could not stay warm, no matter how much they wore.

Even though there was shelter, the light was erratic and the snow sporadically fell, turning into small droplets of water that wet the lamp paper.

Just when everyone was beginning to become anxious, the sound transmission array suddenly activated, and the 36 true essence stones began to light up one at a time.

Yang Lin immediately stood up, looking unblinkingly towards the sound transmission array, his ears at full attention.

A sound transmission array was different from a sound transmission talisman, everyone around it would be able to hear the message. As the light of the transmission array began to reach a peak, the sound of Qin Ziya's voice was emitted.

“Qin Xingxuan was off by two necessary wins. She can go no further in the group stages.”

“Ling Sen won 12 and lost 3. His results in group six qualify him to take part in the next stages. He has entered the top 100.”

“Lin Ming... all matches were complete victories. He is first in the qualifying group and he has entered the top 100!”

Even though Qin Ziya was usually tranquil, his voice still trembled as he said Lin Ming's results.

All matches were complete victories!

This was a glory that had never happened ever since Sky Fortune Kingdom was founded!

For the countries ranked in the middle of the 36 countries, it was already a cause worth rejoicing if they had a talent that could pass the mountain gate trial every 2 or 3 Total Faction Martial Meetings. A local talent of Sky Fortune Kingdom hadn't passed the mountain gate trial in the last 15 years!

But now, the three disciples, Lin Ming, Ling Sen, and Qin Xingxuan, had all crossed the mountain gate trial. Not only that, but Lin Ming and Ling Sen had both passed the first group stage.

What was even more riveting was that Lin Ming had passed by having a complete victory!

What kind of glory was this? Even Huoluo Nation had never achieved something like this!

“All matches, complete victory? If it really is a complete victory, then Lin Ming has just created a Sky Fortune Kingdom record!” The Heavenly Abode Elder Sun Sifan gleefully laughed. He was probably the Elder in the Seven Profound Martial House that had the best relations with Lin Ming. He had supported the newbie Lin Ming during the time of the entrance examination when he had achieved first place. Now, Sun Sifan believed that this was the wisest decision he had made in his entire life.

Compared to the laughing Sun Sifan, Yang Lin sank back into his chair. His hands were trembling as they gripped the armrest. This revealed his inner excitement and roiling emotions.

Yang Lin was absolutely the most overjoyed person here. Someone like Lin Ming with such a strong and pure heart of martial arts would never be ungrateful and renege on a promise that he had made. As long as there wasn't an accident, Yang Lin would be able to smoothly inherit the throne.

Yang Lin had already been waiting too long for this day. Although everybody looked up to him as the Crown Prince and they were in awe of what a great position he had, no one actually understood the pain, doubt, and fear that pierced Yang Lin's deepest feelings. Once the struggle for the throne began, there was no turning back. Once he walked down that harsh path, there was no redemption if he fell. Even his own mother's and sister's life were tied together with his.

It was as if he were walking on a tightrope every day and living in abject fear of the future's possibilities. But now that he finally saw the dawning sun, how could he not be excited?

The new Seven Profound Martial House disciples also cheered as they heard the news. They had braved this cold wind in order to stand here because they were part of the Linmaniacs that had taken Lin Ming as their idol. To them, they would never envy Lin Ming's glory, they would only admire and respect him.

Hu! Hu! Hu!

Several dozens of sound transmitting talismans simultaneously lit up at once, rapidly circulating the joyous news.

Because of the distances, series of sound transmitting talismans were used. These ordinary sound transmitting talismans could only work in a hundred mile range. A large sect could use high-grade sound transmitting talismans that could send messages tens of thousands of miles, but Sky Fortune Kingdom naturally wouldn't have this sort of sound transmitting talisman.

As one batch of sound transmitting talismans burned out, the second batch was lit!

In the dark night, the dancing flames of the sound transmitting talismans became increasingly brilliant and gorgeous.

Yang Lin took a deep breath. Watching these burning flames, he suddenly thought that this sight was extremely beautiful...

.....

Next day, Profound Sky Mountains –

It was a new day and a new martial stage. There were less matches today, but the matches were much more intense.

The matches were still arranged without drawing lots, the referee was the one who organized the brackets. This was to arrange the various participants based on their strength, and so that the extremely formidable seeded participants wouldn't meet ahead of time.



Lin Ming had been placed in the seventh group, and this group also had ten people.

Within these ten was actually a direct disciple of the Array Faction, Fang Qi.

In addition, there was also the Mirage Faction's Bi Tinghua.

In this group of 10, every disciple had to fight in 8 matches, there would only be one person they wouldn't battle. The match between Lin Ming and Bi Tinghua was said to be inevitable.

Even though two strong participants like Lin Ming and Bi Tinghua would meet, this would be replicated across many martial stages. Out of each group, the participants would be divided again based on their final result. The top three would enter the first tier, the next three would enter the second tier, and the remaining four would enter the third tier.

With ten groups, there would be a total of 30 people in the first tier. Although these 30 people weren't considered to be the top 30, there wouldn't be much difference. When the time came for the round robin tournament, the final result would be decided by points. In that case, the first place participant in the first tier would become the champion of the Total Faction Martial Meeting.

The second tier would also carry out a round robin tournament. The top ten ranked of the second tier would earn the qualifications to challenge the rankings of the first tier disciples. If they won, they might be able to advance into the top 30. But, it

would basically be impossible for them to reach the top 20.

The third tier was the same except they could earn the qualifications to compare to the second tier.

In short, this current group stage was extremely critical, it would directly decide the final result of a contestant.

Whether a carp fish could become a dragon would all be decided here!

If one wanted to struggle for the top 20, they would have to at least reach the first tier!

This time, unless one was a talent on par with a direct disciple, there was no way that they would be able to hide the extent of their strength. The first tier of each group only had three people. After deducting a spot for the seeded player, there were in fact only two spots that the disciples could struggle for.

With nine people competing for 2 spots, and not only that, but with these 9 disciples being top-tier geniuses that had passed through layers and layers of screening, the intensity of the competition could be imagined.

“First match! Jing Chanyu against Zi Ling!

With the referee’s announcement, a woman activated her movement technique and jumped onto the stage, her clothes

fluttering in the wind just like a heavenly fairy maiden that was riding the surging waves. The woman's face was covered with a thin light gauze veil, but it was still possible to faintly make out the image of her face. Although she wasn't considered to be a heavenly beauty, there was actually something mysterious about her that was extremely fascinating.

Qin Xingxuan was slightly stunned. She said to Lin Ming in a low voice, "That's Jing Chanyu from Grace Venerate Nation. She's the sister of the brother sister pair from Huoluo Nation, the two of them are called the Jingchan Duo, and they are more famous than you right now."

Grace Veneration Nation was an extremely mysterious country. It wouldn't be wrong to say that they were the strongest country within the 36 countries. The whole population of Grace Venerate Nation believed in a goddess named Chan. In Grace Venerate Nation, the theocracy was above the imperial throne. If the Emperor ascended the throne, he also needed to be crowned by the leader of their church.

Lin Ming guessed that this 'goddess' named Chan had a very high possibility of being someone like the Southern Wilderness's Sorcerer. She might have been a Supreme Being that had appeared in ancient times and left behind some inheritances and legacies after flying towards the Realm of the Gods. With her good fortunes and lucks that she left behind, this would have been the reason for the power of Grace Venerate Nation.

The Jingchan Duo's compensation rate for becoming the top champions of the 36 countries was 1:2. As for Lin Ming, his odds

had been 1:6. After he handily defeated the Refiner Faction's Sun Dong, his compensation rate had dropped to 1:3. Although his odds were good, he was still overshadowed by the Jingchan Duo.

This caused Lin Ming to have a wondering curiosity about these twins. What was exactly so great about them?

Seeing Jing Chanyu step on stage, the audience was stirred into a furor. Especially the male disciples, their interest towards Jing Chanyu far surpassed everyone else. The obsessive light from their eyes was nearly visible.

"I heard that she is only 18 years old and this is her first time participating in the Total Faction Marital Meeting. I wonder what rank she'll reach in her first time!"

"She might be the next Zhang Yanzhao!"

"Up until now there hasn't been an opponent that has disturbed her calm, no one has even managed to take her veil off, it really is indescribable. Such a beautiful girl, it's a pity she's wearing a veil..."

As the people hollered in excitement, all of their eyes were focuses in Jing Chanyu. Suddenly, the referee announced, "Match, start!" Everyone hesitated. Mm? An opponent hadn't appeared on stage yet, where was Zi Ling?

"How come there's only Jing Chanyu on stage?" Qin Xingxuan

asked, also puzzled. She looked at the martial stage in confusion.

Lin Ming smiled at her and said, “Zi Ling is already on stage. It’s just that she went on earlier and she’s hiding in distorted light so she can’t be seen so easily.”

“What? How is that possible?” Qin Xingxuan was shocked. Isn’t this just invisibility? The path of martial arts truly diverged and converged into endless profound paths, any strange and wonderful phenomenon could occur.

At this moment, an indifferent voice could be heard from behind them, “Zi Ling is a talented disciple of the Mirage Faction. She is able to manipulate light to deceive the eye. During the last Total Faction Martial Meeting, she attained a 56th ranking. Now after three years, it looks quite promising that she’ll reach the top 30.”

## Chapter 249 – Jingchan Duo

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Lin Ming turned around to see that the speaker was actually Jiang Lanjian. Although Lin Ming didn't really know him, he could tell that Jiang Lanjian was someone with a very broad and accurate sense of judgement; he wouldn't easily label someone as a 'talent'.

Lin Ming laughed and smiled as he spoke, "Interesting. If the first group stage was a husband and wife fighting, then this second stage is truly a gathering of masters!"

Jiang Lanjian looked at Lin Ming in surprise and replied, "Your group is quite strong, but it seems that you're confident in yourself."

In the seventh group, there was Fang Qi, Bi Tinghua, Jing Chanyu, and Zi Ling. With Lin Ming, that was five altogether. These five people were competing for three spots. However, Fang Qi's place could already be considered as guaranteed. Jiang Lanjian thought that Lin Ming would be extremely solemn facing these experts, but he hadn't expected Lin Ming to be merrily laughing. Either Lin Ming had entirely given up on entering the first tier, or he had extreme confidence in his own power. As for Jiang Lanjian, he thought that Lin Ming was part of the latter.

"Who do you think will win, Jing Chanyu or Zi Ling?" Lin Ming asked Jiang Lanjian.

Jiang Lanjian shook his head. "They still haven't revealed their true strength. Not only that, but since they both reached this stage

by having complete victories, I don't know what to expect.”

There were four or five people in each group that had achieved complete victory in the last stage. In the seventh group there were five. These five were Lin Ming, Fang Qi, Bi Tinghua, Jing Chanyu, and Zi Ling.

However, after this group stage, at most, there could only be two participants who would possibly remain undefeated.

As the two boys spoke, the battle on the martial stage had already begun.

This was an extremely strange fight. From the very beginning, the audience hadn't been able to see where Zi Ling was. They only saw lights flashing just like celestial beauties that were scattering flowers, blinding their eyes.

However, Lin Ming was able to rely on his powerful perception in order to clearly see what was happening on the martial field. Zi Ling waved her arms to create six sharp bladed edges. These edges seemed gentle as they emitted light, but each one was able to instantly destroy an early Pulse Condensation martial artists.

Because the speed was too fast, the light beams drew a series of rainbows in the air as they let out sharp whistles that made the scalp tingle.

“Manipulating the power of light is truly an incomparably

mysterious and amazing ability.” Lin Ming felt that although those light blades were formed of true essence, they also contained a hint of light essence. This was a mystical power that was more elusive than the seven natural heaven and earth origin energies of metal, wood, water, fire, earth, wind, and thunder.

In an instant, 36 light blades hovered in the sky. These light blades howled in the air as they danced around, but they still hadn’t attacked Jing Chanyu. Suddenly, Zi Ling clasped her hands together and shouted out, “36 Light Blade Extreme Execution!”

With this cry, the 36 light blades all focusses in one direction and soared towards Jing Chanyu.

Facing this light blade attack that attacked from every dead angle, Jing Chanyu hadn’t even lifted her hands. Instead, her hands lay flight, and a soft light emanated outwards from her chest, forming a thick light cover that all over her just like an eggshell.

Chi chi chi chi!

The blades of light struck against the thick barrier and encountered a massive resistance, instantly coming to a near halt. Meanwhile, the blades of light also caused the eggshell to rapidly melt away.

“Halcyon Reflection 1000 Shaded Hands.”



Jing Chanyu turned over both her hands, and a series of shadows condensed from her fingers and flew into the air, covering the sky.

Bang!

Zi Ling, who had been hiding in the distorted light, suddenly gave a stuffy cough and was directly forced out into the open by Jing Chanyu's strike. Zi Ling was holding a sword of blazing light in her hand, an expression of shock twisting her features.

“Be defeated!”

Jing Chanyu parted her delicate rose red lips, and began to hymn in a low voice. A massive, glowing, golden hand slowly manifested in front of her.

“Halcyon Reflection Great Wisdom Palm!”

Bang!

A huge golden palm imprinted onto Zi Ling's body. The sword of light in Zi Ling's hand broke apart, and she let out a spray of blood before being sent flying backwards, landing onto the safety net outside the stage.

“Jing Chanyu, victory!”

With the announcement of the referee, the audience hadn't even

had time to react. From the beginning of the match until the end, only a short period of ten breaths had passed.

Jing Chanyu had only used three moves. One defensive, and two offensive. After three moves, Zi Ling had been defeated! However, Jing Chanyu hadn't even moved a single step. The veil that lightly hung on her face hadn't even been blown by the breeze. From start to finish, Jing Chanyu had been incomparably tranquil.

Zi Ling wasn't a useless nobody. When she was young she had already been chosen as a core disciple of the Mirage Faction. Her talent was simply amazing, and at the last Total Faction Martial Meeting she had reached rank 56. During this Martial Meeting, she had achieved complete victory within the first group stage, and would have easily strode into the top 30. But now, she had actually lost to Jing Chanyu! And in only three moves!

This Jing Chanyu was simply too strong!

Jiang Lanjian's eyebrows ticked up. Between Jing Chanyu and Zi Ling, he hadn't really thought either side had an advantage. But to his surprise, Jing Chanyu won by a landslide. This was enough to prove that she had the ability to reach the top 20 rankings!

If she could really reach the top 20, then she was an existence to be considered. As far as Jiang Lanjian knew, Jing Chanyu wasn't too old. Three years later she could return to the next Total Faction Martial Meeting.

At that time, her limelight might even be greater than this

## Martial Meeting's Zhang Yanzhao!

If anyone of the 36 countries disciples could break into the top ten, that was sufficient enough to be recorded in the annals of the Seven Profound Valleys history. That would simply be an extraordinary result!

Also....Jing Chanyu had an older twin brother, Jing Chanshi; his strength shouldn't be any weaker than Jing Chanyu. The tiny Grace Venerate Nation had actually produced two talents that were capable of reaching the top 10 rankings in the Total Faction Martial Meeting within the next three years; this was unprecedented in the last 100 years!

Jiang Lanjian couldn't help glance at Lin Ming and was surprised that Lin Ming was still looking on with bored indifference. Although he may have been surprised by Jing Chanyu's strength, he obviously wasn't too worried for himself.

This fellow was simply too confident! The quality of talents during this year's Total Faction Martial Meeting was exceedingly promising. The 36 countries and 16 martial families had managed to produce Zhang Yanzhao, the Jingchan Duo, and Lin Ming, four peerless talents. Not only that, but the Jingchan Duo and Lin Ming were still young, they would have a tremendous amount of growing they could do in the next three years....

With this thought, Jiang Lanjian's eyes suddenly jumped up. Lin Ming looked like he was 16 or 17, but just how old was he?

Although there was only a one year difference between 16 and 17 years of age, this actually created an enormous difference in a martial artist's cultivation.

Normally, a child raised in a large sect would start practising martial arts as soon as they could walk. During their entire childhood, they would practice martial arts in order to lay a solid foundation for their future achievements. They would build up their body with rare and precious medicines, but they wouldn't cultivate true essence yet.

In order to cultivate true essence, one needed the body to grow. Starting at 12 years of age, a martial artist child would begin to cultivate Body Transformation's Six Stages such as Strength Training, Flesh Training, and Viscera Training.

A 16 year-old would have cultivated for four years whereas a 17 year old would have cultivated for five. This difference was neither small nor meaningless.

If Lin Ming was 17 years old then he could be considered a first-grade talent. If he was 16 years old then he would be considered as an extreme talent that wouldn't be inferior to any of the Seven Faction's direct disciples by much!

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“Second match, Fang Qi to Zhou Yan.”

As Lin Ming heard Fang Qi's name, he couldn't help but pay a little attention. The Seven Profound Valley's Seven Factions were respectively the Sword Faction, Array Faction, Puppet Faction, Zither Faction, Acacia Faction, Refiner Faction, and Mirage Faction.

Of these, the Sword Faction was the one whose disciples had the strongest attack power. However, that didn't mean that the disciples of the Sword Faction were the most powerful. Each of the other six had their own unique skills and abilities. For instance, the Puppet Faction, Mirage Faction, and Array Faction had extremely peculiar defensive and offensive skills; they could use a nearly endless variety of outlandish and absolutely bizarre moves. Although they might not be as strong as the Sword Faction, they were actually much more difficult to deal with than the Sword Faction.

To Lin Ming, out of these Seven Factions, he was most interested in the Array Faction. When he had obtained the second memory fragment from the Supreme Elder, he had also obtained that Elder's memories as an array master. Unfortunately, Lin Ming's cultivation was simply too low to make use of any of those array master's memories, thus, he was unable to practice it.

Lin Ming had thought that he would need to be at least at the Xiantian realm of cultivation to create the large scale array formations in those memories. However, the Seven Profound Valleys' Array Faction had taught him a very good lesson.

The small Thunderbolt Devilfire Bead had actually saved Lin Ming's life.

Lin Ming had never dreamt of sealing a tiny array formation configuration within a tiny bead.

Lin Ming had even considered that if he were to enter into the Seven Profound Valleys Total Faction later, wouldn't it be best to join the Array Faction?

From the start of the match Zhou Yan had used a defensive martial skill in order to cover his body with layer upon layer of protective true essence. However, nobody laughed at him for being cowardly. In fact, it was already a kind of courage to have the guts to face a direct disciple of the Seven Factions.

Zhou Yan wasn't some worthless disciple; during the last Total Faction Martial Meeting, he had been ranked 70. Throughout the group matches, he had only dropped one fight. Although it wasn't very hopeful for him to enter into the first tier, it would be simple for him to enter into the second tier.

“Scarlet Blazeblade!”

After he had cloaked himself in his ultimate protection, Zhou Yan instantly let loose his do-or-die finishing blow. He was a disciple of the Refiner Faction and in his body was a Hollow Flame Essence. He had poured the entirety of his true essence into this Hollow Flame, and a lifelike fiery dragon surged out from his body.

The martial stage was surrounded by a fantasy array formation so that the audience outside couldn't feel the burning heat of

that fiery dragon. Still, from the way that light twisted around the flame dragon, one could imagine just how hot it was.

This sort of fiery dragon was enough to turn an entire lake into steam. If it struck a martial artist, even a middle Pulse Condensation period master would be charred.

But, Fang Qi only lifted his right hand and drew a golden array symbol in the air. Then, the impossible occurred. The fiery dragon crashed into the golden symbol and disappeared inside without a trace left. It was as if that golden symbol was connected to a different space and shifted the fiery dragon to a completely unknown land.

Seeing such a bizarre scene, Zhou Yan only let out a depressed sigh and uttered, “I admit defeat.”

The Scarlet Blaze flame was his strongest skill, but in front of someone like Fang Qi, not even a tiny spark had struck his robes. Instead, his flame attack had simply disappeared into nothingness. This caused Zhou Yan to feel extremely inadequate and useless; the disparity between them was just too great, enough that he wasn’t even able to imagine how much it was.

“Fang Qi, victory!”

This was already expected. The audience only murmured about how strong a direct disciple was and waited for the next match.

Lin Ming was actually thinking back on that symbol. How could such a small symbol swallow the scarlet flames that Zhou Yan had forced out with all his strength?

He felt that there was an enormous difference between the array formation system in the Realm of the Gods and the array formation system in the Seven Profound Valley's Array Faction. It could even be said that they were two completely different set of skills!

To Lin Ming, it seemed like the Array Faction's array formation system could play a much bigger role for the current him.

At this moment, the voice of the referee interrupted Lin Ming's thoughts.

“Third match, Lin Ming against Bi Tinghua!”

Lin Ming raised his head and saw that Bi Tinghua was looking at him with a bright smile plastered across his face.



## Chapter 250 – Lin Ming VS Bi Tinghua

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The match of Lin Ming against Bi Tinghua was considered a fight between two heavyweights. It also meant that there would be one less contestant with an undefeated string of complete victories.

This match had aroused a tremendous interest amongst almost everyone. This wasn't just because Lin Ming was strong, but also because this match was directly related to who the strongest amongst the disciples from the 36 countries was.

After Jing Chanyu defeated Zi Ling, she had seized the number one position among the disciples of the 36 countries, and was currently the one with the best betting odds to win at a rate of 1:1.1. As for her big brother Jing Chanshi, his odds of becoming the 36 countries champion was 1:1.3.

This had caused those that didn't bet on the Jingchan Duo to feel great regret, but those that did were all smiles.

It was almost impossible to make any money on a 1:1.1 compensation rate. Still, even if they couldn't, many people still happily bet on Jing Chanyu.

As for Lin Ming, his odds rose back to 1:6. Although he was the third highest possible candidate to win the 36 countries championship, his odds of winning were still far compared to the Jingchan Duo.

This match between Lin Ming and Bi Tinghua was very

important. It would determine, to a great extent, just who the title of number one amongst the 36 countries rightfully belonged to.

Without a doubt, Bi Tinghua's strength far surpassed that of Zi Ling. As for who was stronger between Bi Tinghua and Jing Chanyu, most people thought that Jing Chanyu was. If Lin Ming couldn't defeat Bi Tinghua, then he would have lost all qualifications to become the champion of the 36 countries.

However, Lin Ming's cultivation was only at the peak of Bone Forging. As for Bi Tinghua's cultivation, he was actually at the late Pulse Condensation period. The difference was almost an entire realm; how could Lin Ming possibly win?

Let alone the audience who didn't believe Lin Ming could win, not even Qin Xingxuan who normally had unshakeable faith in Lin Ming was sure.

"Lin Ming, I've been waiting for this match for a very, very long time. It's a pity that I happened to miss you in the first group stage." Bi Tinghua was a bit on the feminine side, so when he smiled it was just as if a dainty daisy was blooming. He narrowed his eyes as he glanced at Qin Xingxuan who was waiting for Lin Ming by the side of the martial stage. He said, "Your young lady friend is probably hoping very much for you to win. I'd be happy to let her feel disappointment."

"I also think it was a pity that I missed you during the group stage. As for my friend, rest assured, she will not be disappointed." Lin Ming knew that he absolutely could win against Bi Tinghua. The only question was whether he could do so while only relying

on his Samsara martial intent. With regards to his Samsara martial intent attack, Lin Ming didn't have full confidence.

As the audience heard this exchange of words, they were left speechless. This Lin Ming was really overly confident in himself.

Bi Tinghua was one of the top three ranked core disciple of the Mirage Faction. His cultivation was at the late Pulse Condensation period, but in terms of true combat ability, he could compare to a half-step Houtian realm master.

During this Total Faction Martial Meeting, Bi Tinghua had a very high chance of reaching the top 20 rankings. As for Lin Ming who only used bizarre soul attacks, with Fang Qi, Jing Chanyu, and Bi Tinghua still blocking his way, none was in favor of him reaching the first tier.

Bi Tinghua laughed and said, "You're quite confident. How unfortunate. Let me tell you this, I also know soul attacks. I wonder, are your soul attacks weaker or stronger than mine?"

"Originally, I wasn't sure. But looking at the sorry state you're in, I think my chances might have just increased."

"Humph! What ridiculous nonsense!" Bi Tinghua gave a cold snort and suddenly the surrounding scene immediately changed. The audience disappeared, the sky disappeared, the ground disappeared, and Lin Ming and Bi Tinghua suddenly both stood in an endless wilderness, a prairie that extended to the ends of the earth. The ground underneath their feet was covered in soft grass,

small fresh flowers and fragrant plants bloomed.

“This is my Mirage Faction’s dreamland combined with my soul attack; I’d like to see just how you’ll block this!

An illusion attack was also a kind of soul attack; it could invisibly kill someone.

An Illusionist could create his own separate dreamland. In this dreamland, the Illusionist was a god-like existence. In this dreamland, he could create anything, find out anything, and kill off anyone he wished with just a thought.

While trapped within a dreamland, if a martial artist believed he was dead, then he would really die in reality. An illusion was truly capable of killing a person. Ordinary abilities killed a person by destroying their body, but an illusion attack was able to destroy the human soul.

“Die!”

Bi Tinghua gave a loud shout and behind him appeared a beautiful naga. This naga had the upper body of an exquisitely heavenly beauty, naked and almost perfect in proportions, but her lower body was that of a massive python.

“Dying in the belly of this beautiful snake woman is also your luck! Go, eat him!”

With a thought from Bi Tinghua, the naga's mouth curved up in a charming smile. Suddenly, the naga dropped to the ground, flattening her body to the floor and firing towards Lin Ming like an arrow.

“Rahh!” The beautiful naga uttered a low roar. Suddenly her cherry red lips opened, and revealed rows upon rows of sharpened teeth that extended from ear to ear. In that instant, her beautiful face became horrifyingly ferocious.

A dreamland battle?

A battle of souls within this dreamland was just to Lin Ming's liking. Recently he had been trying to come to a deeper understanding of his Samsara martial intent. Since he had such a great opportunity to fight like this, he certainly wouldn't miss it.

Lin Ming shut his eyes and then opened them. In that moment, his eyes had lost their pupils, becoming nothing but a swirling black vortex.

As, the Samsara martial intent activated A titanic black storm appeared spanning the entire dreamland, a massive vortex in the midst, swallowing all.

The grass and flowers were torn to shreds and trees were uprooted. Dirt and rocks twisted into the air, as everything began to rise towards that swirling vortex. The beautiful naga was also thrown into the roiling storm. With a pitiful scream, she was torn into pieces.

“Mm? Your eyes!”

Bi Tinghua had just reacted when he felt his mind tremble. Countless phantoms and images rushed into his brain, flooding his thoughts as his spiritual sea almost collapsed.

Bang!

The endless prairie dreamland collapsed, turning into nothingness under the power of the limitless vortex. In its place, a vast black space formed. Countless brilliant stars shined like glittering diamonds overhead, while the ground was nothing but barren black rock.

“Die!”

Lin Ming’s eyes flashed, and a black vortex fell upon Bi Tinghua, completely shredding him to bits!

However, the destroyed body of Bi Tinghua turned into millions of black butterflies that flew into the wind, scattering into all directions.

“Mm?”

Lin Ming felt his heart go cold; this Bi Tinghua was really hard to deal with.

The swarm of millions upon millions of black butterflies soared into the air, covering the entire sky. After a few moments, they all rushed towards Lin Ming, morphing into hawks as they zoomed down, their claws glinting with cold light.

Pah pah pah pah!

The millions of hawks crashed into Lin Ming, submerging into his body as if they were made of nothing but thoughts and headed straight towards his spiritual sea. At this time, Lin Ming's spiritual sea was obscured by countless spirit hawks!

“Get out!”

Lin Ming's eyes flashed with a purple thunder. Suddenly, massive arcs of purple lightning exploded from within Lin Ming's spiritual sea. A gargantuan Purple Thunder Flood Dragon threaded between clouds, thunder billowing like a winter storm. Bolts of thunder the width of pillars covered the entire sea, and the hawks that were struck by this thunder could only let out unceasing pitiful screeches as they were instantly reduced to ashes in the blink of an eye, their black feathers littering the skies.

The power of thunder was the element that most restrained ghosts and illusions. This make-believe attack simply could not injure Lin Ming's spiritual sea at all.

“Mm? His entire spiritual sea is covered in purple thunder!?”

Bi Tinghua was shocked beyond imagination. This was simply a kind of absolute soul defense. Only if the cultivation difference was too high would he be able to do anything, otherwise no one would be able to use a soul attack to damage Lin Ming's spiritual sea.

A thunder-attribute martial artist was when the power of thunder flooded into their true essence. If their power of thunder and their true essence could achieve a 60% fusion rate, this was already very good. It would be considered a fourth-grade thunder fusion, and had enormous significance towards a martial artist's combat potential.

If one achieved 90% thunder fusion, that would be considered as a fifth-grade fusion, and could be considered a thunder-attribute talent.

If one achieved 100%, then that would be a superior fifth-grade thunder fusion; this person would simply be a monstrous genius!

If one surpassed 100%, then not only would the power of thunder completely fuse into their true essence, but it would also enter into the martial artists flesh and blood body, tempering his everything with thunder. Every gesture he made or step he took would flash with thunder. This was a sixth-grade fusion.

But higher the degree of integration between the power of thunder and the body, the more perfect one's thunder fusion was.

A superior sixth-grade fusion was the absolute limit that Bi



Tinghua had ever known about. But, he had never heard of the power of thunder being able to enter one's spiritual sea; this could only be achieved by an unsurpassed thunder fusion. How could he have achieved this point?

Was it a fabled seventh-grade fusion?

If it really was a seventh-grade fusion, then Lin Ming wouldn't even need to use a soul attack. He would only need to use the power of thunder to defeat him.....

Impossible.

This was simply impossible!

Either Bi Tinghua had misunderstood some point, or this little kid had used some sort of secret skill in order to accomplish this.

Bi Tinghua consoled himself by repeating this. But, an inevitable fear emerged from his heart. His main method of attack was to use illusions, yet with his opponent's spiritual sea like this, it could be said that Lin Ming was in an invincible position.

A soul force duel was ever-changing and fluid. Once fear crept into one's mind, that was a fatal flaw. With Lin Ming's keen perception, he instantly caught onto that moment where an opening appeared in Bi Tinghua's spiritual sea.

The Samsara martial intent surged forth!

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“Is there something wrong? I just came back from the toilet and those two fellows are still standing on stage without moving? Are they still going to fight or something?”

“You idiot, the match had already began. From then to now, those two are engaged in an illusionary battle!”

“What?” The surprised martial artists came from a martial cultivation family; he had absolutely no understanding at all of the Seven Profound Valley’s illusion attacks.

“The Seven Profound Valley’s Mirage Faction has two offensive schools, one is mystic attacks and the other is illusions. Zi Ling was part of the mystic attack school, and this Bi Tinghua is from the illusion school. Within an illusion, one can instantly destroy the other’s soul. However, Lin Ming also happens to use soul attacks, so that’s why these two people are standing here. Don’t just look at them and see they aren’t moving, the truth is this type of battle is extremely risky; one wrong move and there’s a chance you would become an idiot.”

“What a shitty illusion duel; I can’t even see anything. What’s the point!”

After the martial artist from the martial family finished his criticism, he quickly walked his butt away. He had already been eliminated, and no matter how fierce the fighting was or who was

winning or who was losing, he no longer cared.

However, not everyone was like that. There were some that came to watch for fun. Amongst the audience, there were many that were disciples of the Mirage Faction, and they were also experts from the school of illusionary attacks. They had specifically come to observe this ultimate soul force showdown.

Although Bi Tinghua couldn't be considered the strongest disciple among the Mirage Faction's younger generation, he was still skilled in illusions. It could be said that his attainments in dreamland attacks and soul attacks had reached the pinnacle of what was possible among the younger generation.

Lin Ming and Bi Tinghua's soul force battle symbolized a fierce fight between Lin Ming and the Seven Profound Valleys strongest soul attack junior. If Bi Tinghua lost, then no one in the entirety of the Seven Profound Valley's younger generation could surpass Lin Ming in soul force accomplishments.

This was a matter of pride for the Mirage Faction. If they lost they wouldn't even be able to lift their heads from the shame!

For someone that had the best cultivation methods, the best masters, ate spiritual food since childhood and also had a large variety of resources, to lose to some random country bumpkin martial artist was truly unjustifiable.

## Chapter 251 – One Willing To Fight, One Willing To Endure

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In the endless illusionary dreamland, the Samsara martial intent rolled out like a tide, frantically swelling as it rushed over Bi Tinghua. Because of that split second of fearful hesitation, a glimmer of a flaw was produced within Bi Tinghua's mind. Lin Ming seized this opportunity and struck back.

Bang!

Countless phantoms and images flowed into Bi Tinghua's mind, the endless lives of 100 Samsaras drowning him like a chaotic whirlpool.

A showdown between soul forces was constantly evolving. A dangerous move, a wrong move, and everything could be lost. Fortunately, Bi Tinghua was much more proficient than Lin Ming in terms of utilizing his soul force. Although that flaw in his mind had placed him in a passive situation of defending, his soul force defensive skills were able to barely hold off the attacks on his spiritual sea.

The battle between the two became increasingly ruthless and savage. Lin Ming was relying on the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder in his spiritual sea to launch an all-out offensive. With the power of thunder to protect his spiritual sea, he was in a nearly impregnable position.

As for Bi Tinghua, he was surrounded by danger on all sides.

While Bi Tinghua had the cultivation methods of the Mirage Faction, towards Lin Ming's Samsara martial intent that he had comprehended in the Sorcerer Holy Land after experiencing 100 lives of Samsara, they were on completely different levels in comparison.

With Bi Tinghua's many years of cultivation and foundation within the Mirage Faction accumulated together, he was barely able to endure this attack.

With the dramatic and massive consumption of soul force, Bi Tinghua's true body that was still standing on stage immediately paled, without a single trace of red in his cheeks.

"This damn boy, his soul force was actually so strong!"

Bi Tinghua was a disciple of the Mirage Faction, so he specialized in extremely precise use of soul force. But compared to Lin Ming, he was still inferior. It had to be known that Bi Tinghua's cultivation was almost an entire realm above Lin Ming's.

"Lucky for me this boy has only a single way to attack, and a complete lack of soul force skills. Every time he attacks, he wastes too much!" Bi Tinghua's thoughts raced. As he was resisting Lin Ming's attack, he was also thinking of possibilities to win.

"I can only defend and not attack. Although this Lin Ming has an extremely formidable soul force, he doesn't know any techniques to use with it. Every time he attacks me he wastes a massive amount of soul force. Plus, since I am the one defending, I have to

put in less effort to maintain this. His soul force consumption rate has to be at least three times my own! If this continues, he will definitely lose! As long as I can resist this round of continuous onslaught, my victory will be decided once he exhausts his soul force and can no longer maintain that purple lightning that covers his spiritual sea.”

Thinking this, Bi Tinghua’s lips curved up in a devilish grin. In the end, this country bumpkin martial artist who came from a hick village could only rely on brute force and had no skills. He was doomed to lose by his own hands!

Bi Tinghua had no way of knowing that this situation was exactly what Lin Ming was hoping for. Ever since Lin Ming had begun to use his Samsara martial intent, he had been trying to further his comprehension of the Samsara martial intent. It seemed as if his and Bi Tinghua’s soul force strength were comparable, in addition, this Bi Tinghua was quite skilled in soul force techniques. To come across such a good opponent and moreover, in an endurance match, it could only be considered serendipity.

To Lin Ming, Bi Tinghua was an exceptionally good grindstone to hone his abilities.

The dreamland around them began to morph over and over again. From a prairie to black lands. From black lands to a prairie. From black lands to a desert. From a desert to a bloody hell.

Devils and dark spirits and nagas danced around Bi Tinghua, twisting around his body. These monsters were summoned by Bi Tinghua in order to protect his own spiritual sea. But in front of

Lin Ming's never-ending brutal onslaught, everything was eventually torn apart by the swirling black vortex!

As soon as the match began, it lasted for an incense stick, then two incense sticks, then three incense sticks....to half an hour. During this entire time, the two youths on the martial stage were still standing there, completely motionless!

Bi Tinghua's face was already paler than bleached paper! With half an hour of intense soul force consumption, it wasn't something that the average person could endure. If it weren't for Bi Tinghua's high soul talent and thick foundation, he would have already fallen flat on the ground.

“How is this possible!? Is this fellow really a human!?”

Bi Tinghua couldn't imagine that his opponent could still persist until this moment even though his soul force consumption rate was three times his own. If their positions were reversed, he would have already been done in!

“If I hold on for a bit longer, he won't be able to last much longer! I will be the one to finally win!

Indeed, it was just as Bi Tinghua had said. Lin Ming truly couldn't persist much longer. Since he was on the offensive, his soul force consumption was tremendous!

Lin Ming had been depending on the 'Overbearing Soul Tactic'

that was left behind from the Supreme Elder from the Realm of the Gods. He had already accumulated a great deal of experience with this soul law formula by practicing his inscription technique. Although this soul law formula couldn't be considered the best within the Realm of the Gods, if placed in the Sky Spill Continent, it was actually a top quality technique among all top quality techniques.

However, even though he had this, he still was unable to withstand a soul force consumption that was three times Bi Tinghua's. His complexion wasn't much better than Bi Tinghua's!

Lin Ming had clenched his teeth and persisted in his attacks until now because in this high intensity soul force battle, he had obtained substantial benefits and had also increased his understanding of soul force techniques. Secondly, this was an unsurpassed great chance to further his comprehension of his Samsara martial intent. If he missed this opportunity to fight against someone like Bi Tinghua whose soul force strength was close to his own and was also experienced, then it would be truly been a pity.

In one breath, the two people had been standing on the martial stage for an entire half hour. The eyes of the audience had already glazed over in a dull and dazed look.

The disciples of the Mirage Faction were more fortunate, after all, they were already long used to this type of scene. Not only that, but the outcome of this match concerned the reputation of the Mirage Faction. Naturally, they would be patiently watching.



As for everyone else, they had already lost their patience. Some people had left this stage, and some people had just fallen asleep in their seats.

“Lin Ming probably can’t persist much longer.”

In a duel between soul force and illusion techniques, it was absolutely difficult for outsiders to determine who had the upper hand in the duel. They simply weren’t able to see what sorts of moves and abilities were used. They could only distinguish a general situation of the duel by looking at the external appearance of the participants. At this moment, Bi Tinghua looked a bit better than Lin Ming.

“Mm. It’s just really inconceivable that a martial artist from the 36 countries could reach his point. To compel Senior-apprentice Brother Bi into this appearance, this Lin Ming truly is a worthy talent. But this is as far as he goes. Finally, we barely manage to preserve the face of our Mirage Faction.”

As the two Mirage Faction disciples discussed the match, Lin Ming’s body was shaking a bit. As for Bi Tinghua, although his face was as white as paper, he was barely able to stabilize himself from falling.

“He’s going to win.”

“At last!”

The Mirage Faction disciples present sighed a breath of relief. Although this match had been won with difficulty and they had lost a great deal of face, in the end, for better or worse, they had still won.

This soul force contest was completely a contest of endurance and willpower.

After several dozen breaths of time, Lin Ming's soul force was reaching a state of near depletion. If he really ran out of soul force, then Lin Ming would lose his ability to control his true essence. At that time, he would surely lose.

'Looks like I have to stop here.' Lin Ming thought it was a bit of a pity; he had wanted to persist a bit longer and gain some more insights. However, now it seemed that he could only end this soul force showdown and use his Heavy Profound Soft Spear to finish off Bi Tinghua and conclude this match.

As he was considering withdrawing the leftovers of his depleted soul force, suddenly an incomparably pure and vibrant soul energy welled up from within Lin Ming's spiritual sea, making his soul shake with excitement!

'Mm? What is this?'

This pure soul force had suddenly swelled up from the underneath the depths of his spiritual sea; it was just as if it were buried there, and had been waiting for a chance to be unearthed.

‘This is probably...I remember!’

“This is the soul force that I absorbed from Hungry Ghosts in the Sorcerer Pagoda!”

Lin Ming suddenly realized what was happening. Back when he had entered the life and death smelting trial of the Sorcerer Pagoda, he had passed all seven trials in a single go!

The first trial had been a hellish world that was able to enhance his blood vitality. The second trial had comprised Hungry Ghosts that could supplement his soul force. The third trial consisted of beasts that increased his physical body strength. The fourth trial had the Witch Slave which enhanced the defensive power of his body. The fifth trial – mortal martial artists who were able to directly increase his cultivation. The sixth trial held no reward. As for the seventh trial, that was the World of the Sorcerer, in which Lin Ming had comprehended his Samsara martial intent.

During the second Hungry Ghost trial, Lin Ming had used the power of thunder to kill many Hungry Ghosts as well as decapitated a massive beautiful woman who had been the King of Hungry Ghosts. These dead lingering spirits had transformed into a pure spiritual force that nourished Lin Ming’s soul.

But because there was simply too much soul force and Lin Ming’s cultivation was limited, he had, at most, managed to absorb a fraction of it; the rest had been stored within his body.

The excess blood vitality that had been absorbed from the Blood

Devils was also temporarily stored within his body.

And today, under this lucky coincidence, that pure soul force had been unexpectedly awakened, constantly injecting itself into his spiritual sea, nourishing his soul.

Of course, it wasn't possible to instantly take all of it in one go; it was a very long process. But once this pure soul force was released, it wouldn't stop. It could be said that for a very long time in the future, Lin Ming's soul would constantly be strengthening itself even when he's eating or sleeping!

‘What a pleasant surprise!’

After he accidentally connected to that pure soul force that had been buried beneath his spiritual sea, Lin Ming flushed red with excitement. Now that he had Bi Tinghua's ‘help’ to absorb this, he wasn't willing to let this opportunity go. Under the support of the pure soul force, the ferocity of Lin Ming's soul attack became increasingly savage.

“This....how is this possible, he still has the strength to make another round of attacks!???”

Bi Tinghua thought he was going insane. Lin Ming's soul force consumption rate was three times his own, but he had lasted until now and actually had the strength to launch a new salvo of attacks. But as for him, he was already stretched to his limit, completely overwhelmed!

“Impossible! This is impossible! Even Huan Xiaodie is not such an abnormal freak!”

Huan Xiaodie was the direct disciple of the Mirage Faction. In the Seven Profound Valleys, the disciples of the Mirage Faction and Zither Faction were mostly girls. In terms of strength, Huan Xiaodie was far superior to Bi Tinghua.

“He must have reached his limit; this must be his final effort before he completely collapses!”

Bi Tinghua was confident in his assumption. Lin Ming must have reached the limit of his power. Now, with this new unexpected round of even more violent attacks, this must be the side effect of some secret skill that he used on himself.

Most martial artists that specialized in soul force techniques understood several secret skills that they could use in order to insure their survival in a critical moment.

For instance, there were many secret skills that used a form of self-hypnosis in order to stimulate the full potential of the soul. However, the human soul was very fragile; once it was hurt, it was extremely difficult to heal. Therefore, this sort of secret skill tended to have extreme side effects.

Of course, the Seven Profound Valley’s Mirage Faction had their own sets of secret skills. Relatively speaking, the side effects of these secret skills were much milder.

“Humph! You’re not the only one with a secret skill. You think that just because you use it, I won’t dare to do the same!?”

Bi Tinghua’s eyes were colored red anger; he was raging to the point of almost vomiting blood. This had originally been a simple friendly martial arts match, and yet his opponent had used a secret skill without regards to his own well-being. However, he had already spoken so much trash talk before this match. If he lost now, then he would absolutely become a complete laughingstock within the Seven Profound Valleys!

Sh\*t!

Not only that, but there were only three spots in the first tier. Fang Qi was such a freak of nature; Bi Tinghua had to admit that he was definitely not his match. As for Jing Chanyu, he wasn’t completely confident in being able to defeat her. If he lost to Lin Ming now, then he would truly be placed in a precarious position.

If one of the top three disciples of the Mirage Faction couldn’t enter into the first tier, then he wouldn’t have the face to look anyone in the eye ever again.

Thinking this, Bi Tinghua clenched his teeth.

‘This father will fight with you!’

Blood Sacrifice Soul Alacrity Law!

# Chapter 252 – Blood Sacrifice Soul Alacrity Law

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“My Seven Profound Valley’s Soul Alacrity Law definitely has less backlash than yours! We’ll see just who can hold out longer!”

Bi Tinghua was also ready to make any sacrifice necessary; this was a battle he couldn’t afford to lose.

Once his soul was damaged, at worst he would have to spend several months recovering in bed. He could just spend some of his sect points and use his connections to obtain a few bottles of the best soul recovery pills, and he’d be back in no time.

But if he lost this match, not only would he lose all his face, his spirit would be so frustrated that it would negatively affect all of his future cultivation.

Like this, the battle between Lin Ming and Bi Tinghua suddenly became extremely bitter and violent. Lin Ming’s Samsara martial intent was just like the ocean tide that never stopped; Bi Tinghua’s monsters and ghosts, even after being shattered, were endlessly birthed from their remains!

“I defend, you attack, and you consume three times the soul force that I do. Coupled with the side effects from the secret soul skill you are using, I don’t believe that your soul is made of iron! Let’s see how many lives you have to handle this!”

In Bi Tinghua's opinion, Lin Ming was using some sort of forbidden soul technique, and the side effects of that technique would certainly be more dangerous than the one he was using. After all, Lin Ming was just some small country side bumpkin martial artist, there was no way he had adequate or decent training in understanding the consequences of soul damage. If he can't get medicine in the future, his cultivation might even decline!

Thinking this, Bi Tinghua was suddenly in an jubilant mood. He had originally been depressed after having been forced to use the Blood Sacrifice Soul Alacrity Law, but now he was finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

Now, it didn't matter how miserable he would be. What was more important was how miserable his opponent would be!

If a man faced death alone, then he would feel extreme terror. But if faced with the end of the world together, then there wasn't anything to fear.

At this moment, Bi Tinghua's expression changed. In the dreamland world, the massive black vortex that had been giving him a headache suddenly disappeared. In its place a mass of Hungry Ghosts swelled up, thin bones protruding all over. These Hungry Ghosts had distorted limbs as if they were emaciated, and their heads were incomparably massive. Their mouths were twisted sideways, and sharp teeth glinted in the dark. Their blood-red tongue drooped downwards, constantly leaking saliva.

"Could this fellow actually have figured out the concept of using illusions to attack?" Bi Tinghua's face darkened. Up until now, Lin



Ming had only been using that massive black vortex to attack. But now he had summoned a horde of Hungry Ghosts; he thought that these Hungry Ghosts stemmed from the wilds of Lin Ming's imagination.

“Ashura King!”

After Bi Tinghua used the Blood Sacrifice Soul Alacrity Law, Bi Tinghua's soul force had experienced an increase in strength. He was able to directly summon that Ashura King that was usually difficult to call down!

Bang!

The Ashura King smashed into the piles of Hungry Ghosts. The Hungry Ghosts threw themselves on the Ashura King, frenziedly biting its body. Then, Bi Tinghua's face became extremely ugly. The Ashura King managed to resist for a while, before being slowly chewed apart.....

.....

After the first half an hour, another quarter of an hour passed!!!!

The two were still standing on stage, a winner not yet decided!

At this point, the Mirage Faction disciples that were watching began to feel anxious and doubtful; if the match had reached this point, it could only mean that the situation in their soul battle was

extremely dangerous!

A physical injury would only take a few days to heal. Something like a fracture would take a few months. But if the soul was damaged, it might possibly take several years or even a lifetime to recover from.

Even with the support of top quality pills and medicines, it would still take several months to recover.

The two individuals had been standing on stage for almost an hour, and yet there was no victor yet. Had they two of them gone all out against each other?

“Senior-apprentice Brother Bi has probably used the Blood Sacrifice Soul Alacrity Law; if you look at his eyes you can see they are completely bloodshot. He’s already reached his absolute limit! If he continues any longer, there’s a chance his soul would be extremely hurt!

“Let’s wait for another incense stick of time. If the match still isn’t settled, then we will ask the referee to force it to an end; even a draw would be fine. But I don’t think that the Lin boy will be able to last another incense stick of time. You can tell from his red face that something’s not right with him.”

“Mm. I felt his soul force suddenly shoot up a moment ago. He definitely used some sort of secret soul skill to boost his power, and its strength is much greater than the Blood Sacrifice Soul Alacrity Law. Normally speaking, the more potent a secret skill is, the

greater its backlash will be.”

After Lin Ming galvanized the pure soul force that had been buried beneath his spiritual sea, it had caused the blood flow within his body to accelerate and thus his face had become flush red with blood. To a Mirage Faction disciple, it was just like the deathly redness that occurred after using a soul enhancing secret skill.

“Half an incense stick has passed, how can Lin Ming still persist?” A Mirage Faction disciple commented as he furrowed his brows.

“Something’s wrong....”

The Mirage Faction disciple felt something fishy was happening. Lin Ming had simply been able to last for too long a time. Moreover, his soul force power had suddenly experienced a great increase. Besides a soul enhancing secret skill, there was no other explanation as to how that could have happened. Did Lin Ming have a secret skill that somehow didn’t have any negative side effects?

This was absolutely impossible.

He immediately rejected this incredulous idea. If there really was a secret skill like this, then wouldn’t a martial artist’s soul force be all-powerful and endless?

At this a moment, a girl that was standing next to him raised a trembling finger and pointed towards the stage. She whispered, “Senior-apprentice Brother Bi....his....nose is bleeding....”

“Mm?”

The disciple turned around and saw that two streams of blood were flowing down Bi Tinghua’s nose, leaking past his mouth and unceasingly dripping down his chin.

“This is bad!”

“Stop the match! This other man is a crazy madman!”

At this moment, Bi Tinghua’s body trembled, and then he slumped face down on the ground.....

“Lin Ming, victory!”

With the referee’s announcement, most of the audience only had a tepid reaction. This silly little stupid match was finally over. From the beginning to end, the two of them had only stood on stage staring at each other for almost an hour! What could be more boring than this match?

Several disciples of the Mirage Faction rushed on stage. Bi Tinghua’s face was pallid, his eyes were bloodshot, and his nose was bloody. He had long lost consciousness.

“Let’s carry him off.”

The 20 year-old female disciple waved her hand, ordering everyone. She only had unpleasant feelings towards someone like Bi Tinghua, but for better or for worse, he was still one of the three top core disciples of the Mirage Faction’s younger generation.

She looked at Lin Ming deeply, wanting to find some consequence he suffered from using a secret soul technique. However, she was disappointed as she found nothing.

She didn’t believe that there was a secret soul technique that didn’t have any side effects. In that case, there could only be one possible explanation, and that was that Lin Ming had an extraordinarily overwhelming soul force capacity. He must have only prepared to be a weak soul force user, and then lured Bi Tinghua into a battle of attrition with him.

The woman’s voice was icy as she said, “You could already have won earlier, and yet you still deliberately led Bi Tinghua into fighting with you like this?”

Lin Ming had been walking off the stage, but hearing the woman’s question he stopped in his tracks and glanced backwards. He didn’t deny anything. After all, it would impossible for him to clearly explain about the pure soul force that had been slumbering deep beneath his spiritual sea.

He pointed at Bi Tinghua who was lying on the ground and said,

“Believe whatever you want, but if I was the one lying on the ground right now, I believe that your Junior-apprentice Brother would have been very happy to see me in a miserable state. I hadn’t even used my full strength against him, and yet he turned out like this. Did he use some sort of forbidden secret skill? It’s only a friendly martial arts contest, there was no need to push through a secret skill with side effects in order to deal with me. Does he have that great a hatred with me?”

The woman was stunned, speechless. She couldn’t find the words to refute Lin Ming.

“I didn’t force him to use any secret skill, this was something that he brought down upon himself, and yet you are actually blaming me for harming him. Is this the logical reasoning of your Seven Profound Valleys Mirage Faction? Only you can bully others? Others cannot resist?”

The woman grit her teeth and said, “You obviously had ulterior motives and lured Bi Tinghua into this state! Your sly words and arguments are meaningless here. After entering the finals, you will encounter the Mirage Faction’s direct disciple, Huan Xiaodie. When that time comes, I hope you can fight like a man, and not immediately give up!”

“Naturally, that isn’t something you need worry about.” Lin Ming finished his sentence and then turned around to walk off stage.

The audience made room for Lin Ming to leave. In fact, to most people, Lin Ming’s battle wasn’t worthy of anything special.

The match had lasted for almost a whole hour, and though he had defeated Bi Tinghua, it seemed that he had only done so reluctantly. His face had whitened, and then it had flushed red. Obviously, this fight had been extremely difficult for him.

Lin Ming's strength was recognized as a bit higher than Bi Tinghua's. But how could this strength compare to someone like Jing Chanyu?

The odds of the gambling house had changed. Now Jing Chanyu's odds were 1:1.8, Jing Chanshi's odds were 1:2, and Lin Ming's odds were 1:4.

Because of the match between Bi Tinghua and Lin Ming, Jing Chanyu's odds had gone up whereas Lin Ming's odds had gone down. But the odds still favored Jing Chanyu.

Throughout every single match so far, Jing Chanyu had maintained her calm. There hadn't even been an opponent who had managed to force her into taking a single step; no one knew just how much of her strength she had used to defeat Zi Ling.

As for Lin Ming, he had already approached his limit in facing Bi Tinghua. Unless he had cards still hidden in his sleeve, then his chances of defeating Jing Chanyu weren't looking good.

After the five total victory contestants in the seventh group finished their matches, the remaining matches weren't so interesting. Although everyone that had managed to pass the first

group stage could be considered a master, there was simply too great a difference compared to the first few matches.

Like this, the group stage advanced to the second round.

Fang Qi was the first one to go on stage, and his opponent was Zi Ling. As for who his opponent was: Zhou Yan or Zi Ling, there was simply no difference to him.

A single move, instant defeat!

“Fang Qi, victory!”

As the referee announced this, Zi Ling let out a sad, low-spirited sigh. She had been hoping to enter the first tier, but now that she had lost two straight matches, unless there was an accident, she would definitely lose to that Lin Ming fellow!

“Second round....second match....” The referee intentionally paused here, and all of the contestants pricked their ears up in attention. Because the matches were arranged completely according to the referees’ wishes, none of the contestants knew who would be the next one called up.

“Second match, Lin Ming against Jing Chanyu!”

With this sentence, the entire audience rose in an uproar. Lin Ming against Jing Chanyu was absolutely the most anticipated match of the entire seventh group!



The unbeatably Zi Ling and Bi Tinghua who both had complete victories in the first group stage had already been defeated. Now, there were only three people who were still undefeated, and two of those were Jing Chanyu and Lin Ming. As for Fang Qi against Jing Chanyu and Fang Qi against Lin Ming, truth be told, there wasn't much interest in those matches. In everyone's opinion, Fang Qi's victory was inevitable; a direct disciple was simply too strong. With his peak Pulse Condensation period cultivation, his strength was already equal to a middle Houtian master's; his position was simply unshakeable.

Thus, the most anticipated and the most suspenseful match was Jing Chanyu against Lin Ming!

The majority's opinion was that as things stood, Jing Chanyu had a 70% chance of winning, and Lin Ming had a 30% chance of winning.

But how true this was, it could only be found out through a true battle.

Jing Chanyu's clothes fluttered in the wind as she landed in the center of the martial stage.

Jing Chanyu greeted, "Grace Venerate Nation's disciple, Jing Chanyu."

She still had her thin gauze veil on; her voice someone unreal and nebulous.

Lin Ming cupped fists together in respect, “Lin Ming. Please advise.”

# Chapter 253 – Absolute Defense

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The two strong contestants faced each other as a chilling wind slowly blew across the martial stage, gently touching against Jing Chanyu's face veil. This face veil had never been lifted by any opponent's attack or true essence aftermath. This was the symbol of Jing Chanyu's tranquility, and also the reason that almost everyone had unanimously recognized her as the one who would seize the title of champion amongst the 36 countries.

This young girl had left an unfathomably deep feeling in everyone's heart!

“You are very strong. Unfortunately, my cultivation method is a bit special. Your techniques will all become null in front of me.” After the match started, Jing Chanyu and Lin Ming didn't immediately make their move. Instead, they looked at each other as Jing Chanyu slowly spoke.

With her soft words, a hazy and dim halo of light began to condense around her, as if it were a translucent yellow eggshell.

Seeing this eggshell, Lin Ming didn't have any reaction.

In the audience, Zi Ling let out a heavy breath. When she had been fighting Jing Chanyu, her 36 Light Blade Extreme Execution had been blocked by this dainty looking yellow eggshell.

Zi Ling had confidence in the power of her 36 Light Blade Extreme Execution. However, once it entered that eggshell, it was

like a blunt knife that was used to chop into a thick tree trunk. It moved forwards like a slowly, and the energy that gave her technique substance soon dissipated.

Lin Ming was silent. His eyes closed and then opened, and the dark vortex of the endless Samsara rushed straight towards Jing Chanyu, carrying a powerful pure soul force!

Lin Ming used 90% of his soul force power in this strike. When he had been fighting against Bi Tinghua, Lin Ming had been gone easy on him. After Bi Tinghua used a Soul Alacrity Law, Lin Ming had let him persist for another quarter hour longer in order to better absorb the pure soul force that had been buried beneath his spiritual sea, and to also attain more enlightenment and comprehension of his Samsara martial intent.

Now that he faced Jing Chanyu, Lin Ming felt that his opponent had an extremely deep soul defense. Even if he went all out with his soul attack, he still might not win.

Bang!

The soul attack was invisible and had no substance, but when it fiercely impacted on the yellow eggshell, it still created a fierce distortion on the surface.

Zi zi zi!

The yellow eggshell was like a soap bubble in the wind. Although

it seemed to be on the verge of breaking, it still hadn't broken.

The ring of tiles on the martial stage floor was shattered by the violent vibrations of the yellow eggshell, forming a spiderweb of spreading cracks. At the center of all this, Jing Chanyu was standing vigil, her eyes shut as she maintained her usual calm and quiet.

The fierce storm of energy that was occurring outside of the yellow eggshell formed a distinct contrast with the peaceful expression of Jing Chanyu. Her clothes fluttered in the wind, her veil swayed, and many young martial artists were looking at her with obsessive infatuation shining in their eyes.

“Earth-attribute martial artist?” Lin Ming realized that the thick eggshell contained an incomparably powerful earth-attribute origin energy that had managed to fend off his formless soul attack.

“Yes, I was born with inborn earth-attribute origin energy, with medium sixth-grade fusion compatibility. My true essence shield is formed by my earth-attribute origin energy, and is infamous for its defensive power and vitality. Not only can it defend against martial arts skills, but it can also defend against your soul attacks! This is my absolute defense. Although I am inferior to you in soul force and am also inferior to Bi Tinghua, I have a way to make your soul attacks null!”

Jing Chanyu's voice wasn't loud, but every word was still clearly heard.

“Medium sixth-grade fusion!”

There weren't many martial artists that had specific attribute true essences. Not only that, but most who did only had a third-grade or fourth-grade fusion. A fifth-grade fusion was already extremely rare. As for a sixth-grade fusion, that was rare even within the entire Sky Spill Continent!

A superior fifth-grade fusion was a 100% fusion of true essence and a special attribute origin energy. As for a sixth-grade fusion, that was when their attribute true essence penetrated into them and tempered their flesh and blood.

“No wonder Jing Chanyu was able to fight until now without moving a single step. She actually has such an absolute defense; she simply doesn't need to fear an attack from anyone, thus she has no need to hide or dodge.”

“If Lin Ming can't break through her defensive eggshell, then she is in an invincible position. Now that Lin Ming's soul attacks no longer work, how else will he fight?” The one who spoke was a minor martial artist who was one of the few that had bet on Lin Ming to win. He believed that the odds were good, but now looking at the situation, it was a possibility that they he would lose everything.

“Hehe, you should have bet on Jing Chanyu. Although you might not have earned as much, the chances were much higher. A soul attack simply isn't the proper way of doing this. The only reason

that Lin Ming was able to arrive here with his trivial peak Bone Forging cultivation was because he was relying on his soul attack trickery. His opponents were martial artists that didn't know how to defend against soul attacks, so they were caught off guard. Otherwise, how could Pulse Condensation period martial artists lose to a boy at the peak of Bone Forging? That Bi Tinghua was also stupid. Obviously he had some martial skills, so why would he want to compare soul attacks with Lin Ming. If he fought Lin Ming in a head-to-head martial arts contest, how could he possibly lose?

“Now that Lin Ming has encountered a martial artist who is proficient in soul force defense, there are no other tricks that Lin Ming can pull!” The martial artist who spoke was in a good mood. He had placed 10 true essence stones on Jing Chanyu. Although he wouldn't make much of a profit, it was still enough for him to spend for some time.

In the yellow eggshell, Jing Chanyu held her jade-white hands together, and that yellow hazy light covered her hands, just as if she were bathing in bright yellow lights.

“Is your attack over? Then... it's my turn!”

Since his soul attack wasn't working, Lin Ming simply pulled away his soul force. He smiled and said, “Warning your opponent before you attack, you really are confident in yourself.”

Jing Chanyu's red lips parted, and she began to form a series of seals with her hands as she said, “This is just a friendly match, not a life and death struggle. Also... my attack is very difficult to hide from. Even if I told you, you cannot dodge it!”

Jing Chanyu was a girl with an upright and honest personality; she wasn't someone who exaggerated her words in order to show off her strength. If she said her skill could not be dodged, then it could not be dodged!

Her seal-forming fingers began to move faster and faster until they became a series of blurs. In a short period of two breaths, she had formed 1000 seals!

“Halcyon Reflection 1000 Shaded Hands!”

Jing Chanyu turned her hands up and a series of dense finger-shaped shadows condensed, shooting out like a volley of radiant arrows, shadowing the sky!

In an instant, Lin Ming was surrounded by these finger shadows on all sides! These countless shadow fingers broke through the air, sizzling sounds following in their wake. There were thousands of these shadows!

Halcyon Reflection 1000 Shaded Hands. Since this move dared to call itself 1000 Shaded Hands, it of course lived up to its well-deserved reputation!

“No wonder she said it's undodgeable, there's just no way to avoid all these!”

Previously, when Zi Ling had personally experienced this move,



she had almost been instantly struck by these nearly invisible shadows, and was then defeated by Jing Chanyu's Halcyon Reflection Great Wisdom Palm.

Zi Ling was fully aware of just how strong this move was, there was simply no opportunity to resist. She believed that if Lin Ming was struck by the Halcyon Reflection 1000 Shaded Hands, he would have no way to avoid the following Halcyon Reflection Great Wisdom Palm. The result of that would be – defeat!

Facing against the thousands of finger shadows of Halcyon Reflection 1000 Shaded Hands, if it were someone like Fang Qi, he could easily block all of them with his overwhelming strength. But to dodge them? Zi Ling didn't think this was possible.

“Assemble!”

Jing Chanyu gathered her hands together, and all of the finger shadows attacked Lin Ming together!

Lin Ming's lips curved up in a mischievous smile, Golden Roc Shattering the Void!

Pah pah pah pah pah pah!

In that moment, it was unknown how many of those finger shadows pierced Lin Ming. They passed through his body, slicing through the floor and shattering the tiles, sending crushed stone flying into the air!

The audience didn't even have to cry out in alarm. But at this moment, Lin Ming's form disappeared – his form had only been an afterimage!

“There he is!”

A spectator cried out and pointed his finger at the sky. The audience followed his gaze, but could only see shadows, a series of blurs that shunted across the air. It was impossible to tell which one was the true Lin Ming!

Ta ta ta ta ta!

Lin Ming's body was like swirling whirlwind. With his keen perception, he was able to clearly grasp the location of every finger shadow. He discovered that these finger shadows had had a first and a last – it wasn't a volley. It must have been difficult for even Jing Chanyu to simultaneously control these thousands of finger shadows.

Lin Ming saw a gap between the thousands of finger shadows. Like a swift storm, he crossed through!

With the support of the Concept of Wind, Lin Ming's movements were like a liquid dream. Even when the audience saw that he had been forced into a corner and could no longer dodge, when his true self seemed to be pierced by the shadow fingers, it turned out to only be an afterimage left behind by Lin Ming.

To be able to maintain such a high velocity and turning ability in a dense rain of shadows, the audience could only gasp and exclaim again and again. This extreme speed under the collisions and explosions was simply an unprecedented visual feast!

“Good speed!”

Even Mu Qinghong, who was sitting in the Grand Hall was shocked. For a 16 year old boy to have this sort of agility was simply inconceivable. The thousands of finger shadows were even faster than arrows. Not only that, but they were controlled by human sense; there was simply no order or law that governed their attack path. In order to dodge them, one needed not only speed, but amazingly keen perception and instant judgement!

Whiz whiz whiz whiz!

In this storm of chaos, Lin Ming managed to completely avoid every attack and approach Jing Chanyu's side!

Jing Chanyu finally lost all of her former calm. Her pair of limpid eyes were wide with bewilderment as she stared at Lin Ming and her heart was madly beating within her chest.

Just what was this fellow going to do?

Remembering that she had an absolute defense covering her, Jing Chanyu felt a little peace of mind. But at this moment, the

rapidly moving Lin Ming suddenly lifted his fist.

This strong defense was truly able to place many martial artists in a predicament. However, this was no problem for Lin Ming. Flow like Silk was especially useful for subduing defense-based martial artists. The true essence would directly penetrate through all defenses, and completely collapse the internal structure of any defense with extreme vibrations!

All of the tiny units in Lin Ming's body began to breathe at the same time. Lin Ming's true essence stirred, and 5000 vibrating true essence filaments condensed onto his right hand!

“Body Tearing Bone Shattering Fist!”

Lin Ming gave a shout, his punch was just like Flood Dragon Goes to Sea!

Bang!

Lin Ming's solid punch landed against the shield. 5000 vibrating true essence filaments roared forwards, and began to disintegrate the integrity and structure of Jing Chanyu's 'eggshell'.

Ka ka ka ka!

The sound of shattering glass filled the ears. Although this eggshell had been called an absolute defense, at this moment it was cracking apart like a pane of glass, breaking into thousands upon

thousands of tiny pieces!

Vibrating true essence was able to tear apart anything it entered. If Lin Ming was able to enter the realm of creating hundreds of millions of vibrating true essence filaments, then Flow like Silk would be able to turn everything it touched to dust!

Seeing with her own eyes the dissolution of her absolute defense by Lin Ming's fist, Jing Chanyu was spooked beyond all measure!

What!?

How was this possible!?

Jing Chanyu wasn't someone who liked to brag. If she dared to call her ability an absolute defense, then she had complete confidence in it. Her yellow eggshell was outlandishly tough. Facing any powerful attack, it would only deform, but would not break.

But now, it couldn't even deform; it directly shattered into pieces!

## Chapter 254 – Digging For Talent?

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If Lin Ming had released a supremely formidable martial skill that was able to shatter her defense, she would not have been surprised. But it had only been a punch; it was simply impossible to condense enough energy onto that fist. That casual blow he sent out wasn't even with a weapon!

Or maybe he had always been a fist fighting martial artist?

The current situation had already gone beyond any of Jing Chanyu's calculations, she was extremely startled. After Lin Ming broke apart her absolute defense, he grasped towards her jade-like neck!

Jing Chanyu shook as if an earthquake passed through her, and her face turned incomparably white. At such a close range, it was impossible to use any martial skills, but could she use speed to dodge him? Jing Chanyu had never excelled at speed, but even if she did, could she compare to someone like Lin Ming? He was some abnormal freak that had managed to continuously avoid her Halcyon Reflection 1000 Shaded Hands; Jing Chanyu did not believe for a second that she could accomplish something similar.

At this critical juncture, Jing Chanyu formed her hand into a saber, and chopped down at Lin Ming's wrist.

Although Jing Chanyu seemed like a delicate and gossamer lady, anyone who assumed she would be weak because of her physical charms was sorely mistaken. Jing Chanyu had reached a medium

sixth-grade fusion with her Earth-attribute true essence; she had already achieved the stage of using her elemental origin energy to temper her body. Usually if she didn't use true essence, her body would seem soft and liquid-like, but once she imbued her body with true essence, her body would be as strong as a treasure weapon!

Therefore Jing Chanyu didn't need to use a weapon, because her body was in itself a marvelous natural weapon!

Jing Chanyu had wanted to force Lin Ming to retreat with her hand saber, but hadn't thought that not only would Lin Ming not react, he would keep rushing towards her.

This fellow!

Jing Chanyu was finally angry. She clenched her beautiful jade teeth tight, and her left hand chopped down. If a normal martial artist were struck by this, they would suffer the fate of having their bones fractured.

Peng!

Her hand cut down on Lin Ming's wrist, but Jing Chanyu's face drained of blood right after. She felt as if her hand saber had cut down on darksteel. Not only was Lin Ming's hand not affected in the least, but she felt her own arm lose feeling from the backlash reverberations.

Was his body made of iron or something?

She only had enough time to think this single thought. In the next moment, Lin Ming's hand already wrapped around her tender neck and his five fingers gripped tightly against her throat and carotid artery. As long as Lin Ming put in just a bit of strength, he could have immediately killed Jing Chanyu!

Jing Chanyu's veil had originally covered down to her neck, but in that fierce impact when Lin Ming had grabbed onto her, the veil that was the symbol of her tranquility was pulled down, revealing Jing Chanyu's beautiful and mysterious face.

"You...!" Jing Chanyu's eyes flashed with a sullen anger.

"Well fought!" Lin Ming withdrew his hand, bowed in a gesture of respect and then turned to leave the stage. If it hadn't been his hand a moment ago but instead his spear, then Jing Chanyu's throat would have been nothing but a bloody hole. The outcome of this battle had already been decided.

"Lin Ming, victory!"

As the referee announced the victor, the audience was stunned by the sudden turn in events.

What had just happened a moment ago? Lin Ming used his fist?"

And he had shattered Jing Chanyu's absolute defense with a



single punch! There wasn't even true essence condensed onto his fist!

This match between Lin Ming and Jing Chanyu had already undergone all sorts of analysis in the minds of the audience, still, no one thought that the end result would turn out like this. It was just as when Jing Chanyu had defeated Zi Ling: it only took several breaths of time for Lin Ming to defeat Jing Chanyu.

Not only that, but he didn't use the soul force attacks that he was known for. Instead, he had used his fist.

“Isn't Lin Ming a soul force attack expert? How come he used his fist?”

The path of martial arts was limitless and profound. For someone so young like Lin Ming, it was already excellent that they were skilled in a single aspect. A soul force attack was already an extremely obscure and esoteric method of fighting. To be able to achieve good success in this ability, one had to invest a great amount of time within it. Naturally, other aspects of their training would lag behind.

But now it looked like Lin Ming didn't know just soul attacks. If Lin Ming knew some swordsmanship, then the audience wouldn't have been too surprised. But a fist...

This sort of attack method was simply too different from a soul attack, it was just too difficult to link the two together.

“You’ve done well.” Qin Ziya praised as Lin Ming walked off stage.

Although Qin Ziya sounded calm, his mind was actually surging with an overwhelming tide of feelings and emotions. At first, he had estimated that Lin Ming had high hopes of entering the top 20 ranks, but after he had arrived at the Seven Profound Valleys’ Total Faction and seen such geniuses like Zhang Yanzhao, the Jingchan Duo, and others emerge from the shadows one at a time, Qin Ziya’s confidence had been somewhat shaken.

But now it seemed as if he had underestimated Lin Ming by far. Lin Ming reached the first tier, which also meant he had entered into the top 30 ranks. And yet he still hadn’t used his spear!

Did this mean that there was a chance Lin Ming would enter into the top 10 ranks during his first Total Faction Martial Meeting?

Thinking this, Qin Ziya felt a giddiness surge within him. Although the top 10 and top 20 sounded close, the truth was, there was a massive difference between them!

The top 10 rankings were nearly completely dominated by direct disciples! There were some large factions like the Sword Faction and the Acacia Faction that had bountiful resources and numerous disciples. The resources that the second ranked disciple received wouldn’t be that much different from the direct disciple.

In other words, these top-level direct disciples already filled the top 10. If a disciple wished to enter into the top 10, then they would

have to struggle against these direct disciples!

Ever since the Seven Profound Valleys Total Faction Martial Meeting had begun, the 36 countries and 16 martial families had produced a number of amazing talents that were able to enter into the top 20 rankings, such as Zhang Yanzhao.

There were many talents that had entered into the top 20. But to enter into the top 10? There had only been a few!

If Lin Ming was able to enter the top 10 of the Total Faction Meeting during his first time, then what about his second time? Or third time? Lin Ming had only just reached 16 years of age – he still had two more Total Faction Martial Meetings he could attend!

Qin Ziya didn't dare to imagine what could happen. Lin Ming's growth was simply too terrifying. He guessed that after this Martial Meeting, Lin Ming might even be selected to enter the Total Faction ahead of time!

With the support of the Total Faction's resources and cultivation methods, then Lin Ming might even become the champion of the next Martial Meeting! Compared to his own hopes, that would have been three years early!

Of course, even if Lin Ming entered into the Total Faction, his achievements would partially be attributed to Qin Ziya. But thinking that just as his Sky Fortune Kingdom's Seven Profound Martial House had raised a genius like this with so much difficulty, they had to instantly send him away, Qin Ziya felt a bit

melancholic.

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In the Grand Hall of the Seven Profound Valleys, Mu Qinghong had been following Lin Ming’s match from beginning to end.

“Haha, Fairy Maiden Qinghong seems to have some interest in that young boy. This is a talent that my Seven Profound Valleys has cultivated with care; he is a good seedling!”

At the side of Mu Qinghong, Seven Profound Valley Master Shi Zongtian was laughing with a big smile as he spoke.

Mu Qinghong was still quietly observing Lin Ming with her soul force, looking indifferent to the situation. Shi Zongtian had no idea what sort of thoughts Mu Qinghong was thinking, he only thought that maybe she had been drawn in by Lin Ming’s exemplary performance.

Lin Ming had also caught Shi Zongtian’s attention. To have such strength at the peak Bone Forging stage was just too eye-catching, it was hard not to notice.

However, although Shi Zongtian kept note of Lin Ming, he hadn’t investigated any information on Lin Ming’s background.

Lin Ming had been revealed to be a soul talent genius, but, soul attacks just weren’t the right way to do things. Once he tried to

attack the Xiantian realm, he would experience an insurmountable bottleneck. To Shi Zongtian, this meant that Lin Ming wasn't worth caring about. But now it seemed that Lin Ming wasn't just a simple soul force master after all!

Mu Qinghong looked at Shi Zongtian and chuckled in her heart. According to the data she had obtained from Mu Qianyu, although Lin Ming was technically a disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys, he hadn't been 'cultivated with care' as Shi Zongtian had claimed. He wasn't even a disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys Total Faction, but just someone who had been hanging around at a Seven Profound Martial House.

She smiled and said, "He truly is a good seedling. With such strength at his age, his future will be bright and limitless. Valley Master Shi's ability to find talents like this is praiseworthy."

Hearing such high appraisal coming from the lofty Mu Qinghong, Shi Zongtian felt his own mood soar to the sky. Before a top-tier fourth-grade sect, Shi Zongtian was naturally happy to show off the strength of his sect. "I didn't really think that such a genius would emerge at this Total Faction Martial Meeting... it looks like I need to recruit him into the Martial House ahead of time. Such a good seedling is just wasted within the 36 countries... mm? 36 countries?"

Shi Zongtian suddenly realized something. He sent out a true essence sound transmission to a servant and said, "Look up which country Lin Ming from the seventh group came from."

Shi Zongtian suddenly felt a foreboding omen creeping up. This

Lin Ming couldn't possibly come from Sky Fortune Kingdom...

An answer soon arrived back, and that unlucky feeling in Shi Zongtian's heart came true. Lin Ming really was from Sky Fortune Kingdom!

He turned his head to glance at Mu Qinghong, and his expression became somewhat ugly. He remembered that just when the Martial Meeting had started, Mu Qinghong had asked which stage the participants of Sky Fortune Kingdom were at.

At first, Shi Zongtian had thought it was strange that Mu Qinghong of all people would ask something like this. But now, it seemed as if the reason was because of Lin Ming!

If he hadn't guessed wrong, then the reason Mu Qinghong came to the Seven Profound Valleys to specifically observe the Total Faction Martial Meeting was to look for Lin Ming!

A dignified and haughty Fairy Maiden of Divine Phoenix Island with an extreme Xiantian cultivation would actually travel all this way to look for a little boy from Sky Fortune Kingdom with a peak Bone Forging stage cultivation. This was just too ridiculous!

"How old is Lin Ming?" Shi Zongtian asked a servant again with true essence sound transmission.

"Reporting to the Valley Master, Lin Ming has just reached 16 years of age!"

To have reached a cultivation at the peak Bone Forging stage at only 16 years of age, he must have at least a sixth-grade martial talent!

Within the Seven Profound Valleys, a sixth-grade talent was already at the top. But placed within Divine Phoenix Island, a sixth-grade talent was only so-so. It wasn't a reason for someone like Mu Qinghong to personally come to the Seven Profound Valleys.

That meant that there were other aspects of Lin Ming that were worth Mu Qinghong's attention, but he still didn't know what these were!

Realizing this point, Shi Zongtian's complexion became increasingly ugly. The fourth-grade sect Divine Phoenix Island would actually come to his little corner of land in order to search for talent? Although they were a fourth-grade sect and the Seven Profound Valleys was only a third-grade sect, and the difference in their strength was too great, they still couldn't bully them like such!

"Is there a problem, Valley Master Shi?" Mu Qinghong saw that Shi Zongtian was looking awful at the moment, so she smiled as she asked him. She noticed that Shi Zongtian's servant had left for a bit a moment ago, and was able to vaguely guess what had just happened.

Shi Zongtian forced a smile and said with a low voice, "Is Fairy

Maiden Qinghong old acquaintances with my sect's disciple Lin Ming?"

"No. It's just because of some coincidence that Little Brother Lin knows my family's Young Mistress."

Young Mistress!

Shi Zongtian almost wanted to jump out of his seat. The 'Young Mistress' of Mu Qinghong could only be a single person – the Saintess of Divine Phoenix Island, Mu Qianyu!

Lin Ming actually was personally acquainted with Mu Qianyu?

What was happening? How could Lin Ming possibly know the Saintess of Divine Phoenix Island? An existence like her would have a high status even if placed in the entire South Horizon Region of Sky Spill Continent! Even he had to bow if he saw her!



# Chapter 255 – Entering The First Tier

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Shi Zongtian knew that there were two great Saintess of Divine Phoenix Island. Both were seventh-grade talents, and both had seventh-grade fusions with an element.

The Blue Luan Saintess' attribute was water, and the Vermillion Bird Saintess' attribute was fire. They had reached Pulse Condensation at 15, Houtian at 17, Xiantian at 22, extreme Xiantian at 26, and at 27 years of age they had taken a half-step into the Revolving Core realm!

Compared to monstrous talents like this, their so called gathering of talents – the Total Faction Martial Meeting – was more like a gathering of blabbering toddlers.

Thinking of Mu Qianyu, Shi Zongtian couldn't really muster up any courage to resist. After all, Divine Phoenix Island could casually send one of their elders to the Seven Profound Valleys and not even the Elder Ancestor of the Seven Profound Valleys would be their match.

Even if it was Mu Qianyu, with her half-step Revolving Core cultivation, and her true strength that far surpassed a similar martial artist, she might not necessarily be any worse than their Elder Ancestor!

Shi Zongtian couldn't help but wonder if Divine Phoenix Island really didn't care about giving face to their sect, how should he manage this situation?

Lin Ming was still only a Seven Profound Martial House disciple – he wasn't a true disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys. If he left, it wouldn't really be considered as betraying his sect. Not only that, but the resources that Divine Phoenix Island could provide him far exceeded what the Seven Profound Valleys could offer. If he stood in Lin Ming's shoes, then even he would favor Divine Phoenix Island!

Compared to Divine Phoenix Island, Shi Zongtian simply didn't have any confidence.

Shi Zongtian let loose a heavy breath and then asked, "Fairy Maiden Qinghong, is it really for so simple a reason like searching for a friend of Her Highness the Saintess that you came to the Seven Profound Valleys?"

Mu Qinghong laughed, "Is Valley Master Shi worried about something?"

Shi Zongtian calmly said, "Lin Ming is a disciple of my Seven Profound Valleys."

"As far as I know, he is only a student of Sky Fortune Kingdom's Seven Profound Martial House..."

Shi Zongtian furrowed his eyebrows, he wasn't able to refute this point. Thinking back to when he had been boasting, he felt a bit embarrassed.

After a period of awkward silence passed, Shi Zongtian suddenly felt that something wasn't right. Maybe Mu Qianyu knew Lin Ming, but even so, why would Mu Qianyu not contact Lin Ming secretly? All she had to do was take the first step and offer favorable conditions to win over Lin Ming to join Divine Phoenix Island. Why come to their Seven Profound Valleys Total Faction Martial Meeting? Even the reward for becoming the champion of the Total Faction Martial Meeting, a Heaven Opening Pill, wasn't anything to Divine Phoenix Island.

Shi Zongtian couldn't figure out this riddle, but he also didn't ask why.

At this time, Mu Qinghong said, "In truth, my family's Young Mistress has not thought to steal any disciples from your Seven Profound Valleys. In fact, our Divine Phoenix Island may be abundant in resources, but our highest cultivation methods are not suited for men to cultivate. Valley Master Shi can accept Lin Ming as an official disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys after the Martial Meeting. Even in the future, if the Seven Profound Valleys cannot provide sufficient resources to Lin Ming, then our Divine Phoenix Island can also provide some help..."

Is there really such a good thing?

Although Mu Qinghong promised to help Lin Ming with additional resources, it felt a little bit overkill even though he may be friends with Mu Qianyu. Mu Qianyu had personally paid attention to this boy, and had even sent Mu Qinghong.

In Shi Zongtian's opinion, no matter how much of a talent Lin Ming was, he was still a child that hadn't grown up. Was Mu Qianyu betting on Lin Ming becoming a middle Revolving Core master in the future? Or even a late Revolving Core master?

There were countless genius within the Sky Spill Continent, but the number that could reach the Revolving Core stage were truly few in number. In the 600 years of heritage within the Seven Profound Valleys, only their Elder Ancestor had reached the Revolving Core realm.

"This is the only reason Fairy Maiden Qinghong came today?" Shi Zongtian asked, somewhat doubtful.

"Haha, this was just in passing. There is actually something that I need to discuss with Valley Master Shi."

After Mu Qinghong said this, her expression turned somewhat serious.

"Please speak, Fairy Maiden Qinghong."

"This is a very important matter, it will take more than a while to tell you. Let's wait for this Martial Meeting to finish, and then I'll speak in further detail."

Seeing Mu Qinghong's solemn expression, Shi Zongtian could only agree and not pursue the matter any further. As for what matter Divine Phoenix Island would come look to him for, he had

no idea.

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After the match between Lin Ming and Jing Chanyu had finished, the gambling house had decided that Lin Ming would win the championship of the 36 country bet ahead of time.

As for the latter matches in the seventh group, they had all lost suspense. Many contestants had completely given up on competing against Lin Ming. Instead, they tried to preserve their strength in order to struggle for the second tier.

Lin Ming won the third round, the fourth round, the fifth round, until the sixth round where he encountered Zi Ling.

Zi Ling was one of the five players that entered into the second group stage with a complete string of victories. Naturally, Zi Ling trusted in her own strength. But she had lost against Jing Chanyu in only two moves, and then Jing Chanyu had lost against Lin Ming in two moves!

The person who had taken a second to defeat her was defeated in a second by Lin Ming. Zi Ling was well aware of the disparity between her and Lin Ming.

But still, Zi Ling didn't admit defeat. Even though she had a steady position in the second tier, she wasn't yet willing to admit defeat without putting up a fight, because this went against her

heart of martial arts.

After the match started, ZI Ling didn't bother with hiding herself in diffracted light. She knew that in front of Lin Ming who had an extremely formidable soul force, hiding herself was simply deceiving herself. She took out her sword of light and began to display her ultimate move.

“I've placed everything in this strike, 36 Light Blade Extreme Execution!”

Chi chi chi chi!

The 36 blades of light shot out in all directions towards Lin Ming. Lin Ming seemed to take a single step forwards and then suddenly appeared like a phantom in front of Zi Ling, a punch flying out!

Peng!

Lin Ming only used a mere 1000 vibrating true essence filaments to shatter Zi Ling's protective true essence. And then he turned his fist into a claw and gently took hold of Zi Ling's neck.

As expected, the match was finished in a moment.

“Lin Ming, victory!”

As the referee announced the result, Zi Ling let out a light breath,

somewhat depressed. When she faced Lin Ming, it was just as if an ordinary person faced a vicious and savage tiger with just bare fists – there was simply no way of resisting.

Therefore Lin Ming won six straight victories; he had guaranteed himself a spot in the first tier.

“He’s too strong. Besides Bi Tinghua, there hasn’t been anyone who could engage Lin Ming in an extended fight. Not only that, but all these fights have been ended in a few moves. When Lin Ming was facing Bi Tinghua, the only reason it took so long was likely because Lin Ming was deliberately hiding his cards.

Although Lin Ming defeating Zi Ling was what everyone expected, the easy and relaxed manner in which he won caused the audience to be full of praise.

“Next, Jing Chanyu against Fang Qi!”

Fang Qi was the default first place contestant in group 7. Group 7 had ten contestants, and each contestant fought in 8 matches. They would only miss a single person. Since Fang Qi was a seeded player, the one who would dodge him would be the other powerhouse of the group.

Since Jing Chanyu lost to Lin Ming, she was to be the opponent of Fang Qi.

Before Fang Qi walked up stage, he didn’t even glance at Jing

Chanyu. Instead, he approached Lin Ming with a faint smile tracing his lips.

“As a disciple of the 36 countries, you’re quite good. You even might enter the top 10 rankings. At the next Total Faction Martial Meeting, you might be my match.”

“Oh? The next time?” Lin Ming faintly smiled. These Seven Profound Valley direct disciples were just too confident in themselves, to the point of being needlessly arrogant. Of course, Lin Ming didn’t fault them. They had grown up since children with the halo of genius around them. Not only that, but they were also disciples of the Total Faction. That sense of superiority and entitlement was already deeply ingrained within their bones.

“Yes, during the next Martial Meeting you’ll have the qualifications to make me be serious.” In Fang Qi’s opinion, he had already given Lin Ming a very high evaluation.



# Chapter 256 – The Final Competition Begins

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“Are you not convinced by what I’m saying?” Fang Qi faintly smiled as he noticed Lin Ming’s somewhat disinterested expression.

“It’s already a fantastic result for a disciple of the 36 countries to have the qualifications to reach the top 10 ranks in their first Total Faction Martial Meeting. Although your natural talent is shocking, it’s a pity that your cultivation is too low.”

Fang Qi wagged his fingers as he shook his head, “Wait until your strength reaches the middle Pulse Condensation period and maintain your ability to fight above your cultivation. If you can do so, then you will have the qualifications that make you worthy to be my match. But as for some other people, that might not be enough!”

Lin Ming was stunned. The core disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys were just too arrogant. Fang Qi was naturally a proud person, but from his words it seemed that even he admitted he was inferior to some others.

This ‘other people’ that he mentioned could only be extremely abnormal.

Fang Qi didn’t intend to speak anymore, and he jumped onstage, stretching out his fingers as he faced Jing Chanyu. “This match will be decided in five breaths of time!” Lin Ming had used 15 breaths of time in order to defeat Jing Chanyu; Fang Qi would

settle this in five, which was one third of Lin Ming's time. This was to deliberately show those young geniuses of the Seven Profound Valleys that the martial artists from the 36 countries were inferior to them.

“Fang Qi, you can do it!”

“Destroy her in one second, destroy her!”

As Fang Qi's voice fell, the audience burst into cheers. This was the home of the Seven Profound Valleys, and there were also many Array Faction disciples in the audience, and they had a good impression of their faction's direct disciple, Fang Qi. Naturally, he also had an extremely high popularity. In particular, there were many people that had lost a great deal of money because of Lin Ming and Jing Chanyu, and they wanted to vent their feelings.

At this time, Jing Chanyu was using a new veil. She didn't have any reaction, even seeing the overwhelming one-sided support towards her opponent. She had the same absolute defense that surrounded her when she fought Lin Ming, except this time it was much thicker. She intended to thoroughly frustrate Fang Qi for looking down on her so much.

She knew that she was inferior to Fang Qi, but she wouldn't let him easily end this match in five breaths of time.

“Match, begin!”

As the referee announced the beginning of the match, Fang Qi's ten fingers quickly linked together at a terrifying speed as he formed golden symbol after golden symbol. The speed at which he formed his seals was a blur, and in just a breath of time, 100 symbols flew out of Fang Qi's hand and soared towards Jing Chanyu.

In the second breath of time, all of these golden symbols completely surrounded Jing Chanyu. In the midst of this dangerous energy, Jing Chanyu could only grit her teeth and supplement the shield that was guarding her with everything she had. She was a martial artist of the 36 countries. Facing a disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys who looked down on her with nothing but contempt, she could only suppress the anger in her heart.

At this time, Jing Chanyu only had one thought on her mind, and that was to never let Fang Qi easily win. She would fight for the honor of the 36 countries!

“Golden Octagon Lock!”

Fang Qi clasped his hands together, and those hundreds of golden symbols that surrounded Jing Chanyu congealed together into eight formation arrays that struck Jing Chanyu's protection!

Kacha!

That protective eggshell was tightened by an invisible chain, severely distorting!

Jing Chanyu paled, and true essence surged within her body. In that split second, her protection had almost burst open!

“Mm?” Fang Qi lightly sneered. It seemed that his opponent’s protective barrier had exceeded his imagination.

“Heaven and Earth Sword Formation!”

Fang Qi thrust out his hand! 36 blades of light flew out from his body and landed near Jing Chanyu.

The sword light seemed to undulate, as if the air itself was being cut apart by the swords. The sharp sword energy pierced Jing Chanyu’s protective defense!

Chi chi chi chi chi chi!

In that moment, the 36 blades of light had punctured Jing Chanyu’s protection like a porcupine!

It had only been three breaths of time!

Jing Chanyu clenched her teeth; she didn’t think of attack, everything she had was placed into her defense. She galvanized the true essence within her body to the extreme! Her determination would not waver, she would bet everything she had to last past the fifth breath!

The protective eggshell severely deformed, and the sword energy seemed to slow down. Still, in the blink of an eye, Jing Chanyu had already been pressed to her limit. When Zi Ling had used the 36 light blades to strike her, her move had been melted away by Jing Chanyu's protection. But now, it was the opposite! Fang Qi's sword energy was too strong, in just a breath of time his swords had pierced through her protection!

Pah pah pah!

Although the protective eggshell shield hadn't broken, the 36 light blades had already pierced through, pointing at Jing Chanyu from all directions. With just a thought from Fang Qi, Jing Chanyu would be cut to pieces!

"Fang Qi, victory!"

With the referee's announcement, just five breaths of time had passed.

"Only five breaths!"

"Haha, he truly is the direct disciple of the Array Faction. Senior-apprentice Brother Fang is too amazing!"

The audience resounded with thunderous cheers, especially from those disciples of the array faction. Many of the female disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys even dropped their modesty and let out

clear screams. Obviously, they had long held a liking towards Fang Qi.

In fact, of the Seven Profound Valleys' seven direct disciples, except for the strange and weird Puppet Faction direct disciple, all the other six direct disciples were greatly welcomed and popular among girls. Even Ouyang Ming of the Acacia Faction who was known as a player was no different. There were many girls that dreamed of one day being able to marry them; even being a concubine would be nice, as that would greatly increase the resources they would have.

Jing Changyu removed her protective shield and walked down the stage. Under the barrage of endless boos from the enemy audience, her sense of desolation and disorientation was indescribable.

As a proud woman who had grown up under the halo of being a heavenly genius, she was representing the 36 countries on behalf of their honor. And yet, the outcome of this match was... the opponent had said he would end the match in five breaths, and he really had ended it in five breaths. No matter how hard she had tried, she was unable to change this. She hadn't even been able to force him to use his full strength, was the difference in their power truly so great?

As she inadvertently looked up, she saw Lin Ming standing on the side, his hands folded behind his back. His expression was someone plain and casual.

Lin Ming...

After seeing Fang Qi's formidable strength with his own eyes, how could he maintain such a calm expression? What sort of cards did he have in his hands? Would he be able to defeat Fang Qi?

Jing Chanyu couldn't believe that was possible. Maybe Lin Ming was only a person who was unwilling to admit defeat. He might reach the top, but if he did, he would inevitably clash with the direct disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys!

"Are you okay?" Lin Ming could imagine what Jing Chanyu was feeling at this time. She had desperately gone all out, and yet she had still suffered so miserably. As a proud woman of Grace Venerate Nation, the damage to Jing Chanyu's self-esteem could be imagined.

Jing Chanyu stubbornly nodded her head.

Lin Ming smiled and turned to leave. He only came to express his polite condolences to someone who was once his opponent.

At this moment, Jing Chanyu suddenly said, "Lin Ming!"

"Mm? What's the matter?" Lin Ming turned his head. To his surprise, he could hear that Jing Chanyu sounded somewhat excited.

Jing Chanyu hesitated, nipped her red lips and asked, "You... can you win?"

Lin Ming was slightly stunned. Suddenly, he brilliantly smiled and nodded, “I can!”

He hadn’t even asked who he needed to win against.

“I meant to ask if you could defeat Fang Qi.”

“It’s all the same!”

Jing Chanyu was shocked speechless. Even she didn’t expect such an absurd dialogue between them. If they were heard by the disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys, they would probably laugh until they were rolling on the ground.

She had asked if Lin Ming could win, not if he could defeat Fang Qi.

Yet Lin Ming hadn’t even asked any questions. Even after she pointed out Fang Qi, his reply had still been – “It’s all the same!”

This answer was filled with a complete and absolute confidence. It implied that Fang Qi was merely one of the opponents that he would defeat, and that he would be ‘first’!

What did Lin Ming want to do? Did he not want to struggle for the top five, but the top three?



Thinking this, Jing Chanyu gasped. She didn't know why, but she had a gut instinct that trusted in Lin Ming. Perhaps it was because of his confidence, or maybe it was because of Jing Chanyu's own sentinel emotions, but regardless of whatever the reason was, Lin Ming was now the only contestant of the 36 countries who remained undefeated.

Grace Venerate Nation could only come so far, Jing Chanyu's older brother had also lost. Jing Chanyu guessed that she and her twin would end up in the final rankings between 20 and 40. The only one that could go on to represent the 36 countries was one person, Lin Ming!

"Lin Ming, you have to win!" Jing Chanyu slowly said, stressing every syllable.

"Mm. At the very least, I will defeat Fang Qi."

Lin Ming wasn't blindly arrogant, rampant, or stupid. If even someone as proud as Fang Qi admitted that the other seven direct disciples were superior to him, that meant that the disparity between them was very big.

Facing opponents like them, he feared that his matches would not be so easy!

After he parted ways with Jing Chanyu, it was already time for lunch. Now that every other group stage match had been basically settled, the only ones to enter into the first tier from the 36 countries were Jing Chanyu and Lin Ming.

Jing Chanyu's older brother Jing Chanshi was off by one point, and barely missed making the first tier.

As for Ling Sen, in his eight matches he had won two and lost six. He finally entered into the third tier.

Besides Ling Sen, Huoluo Nation's Wang Mu and Easter Sun Country's Zhao Yang also entered the third tier.

Thus, out of all the disciples of the 36 countries, six of them were able to enter into the top 100 rankings of the Total Faction Martial Meeting. Of those, Sky Fortune Kingdom had two disciples, and Lin Ming was ranked first among the 36 countries.

This was an event that had never shown up in the history of Sky Fortune Kingdom.

Qin Xingxuan was also thrilled to receive 120 true essence stones as a reward. She had bet 20 true essence stones on Lin Ming to win when his compensation rate had been 1:6. With Lin Ming's victory, she had gained a net total of 100. 100 true essence stones was equal to 100,000 gold taels! This was a great sum of money even to someone like Qin Xingxuan.

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The second round of the group matches had finished by the afternoon. At that time, all the contestants were able to rest for the

night. On the next day, the final tournament would begin!

The first tier had 30 people, of which 20 were still undefeated. Of these 20 people, seven of them were direct disciples. Before the final showdown, these seven disciples wouldn't normally meet in a match.

Besides the direct disciples, there were three or four top core disciples of the Seven Factions. These individuals were only inferior to the direct disciples. For instance, Jiang Lanjian was one of them. There were many disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys that had already subconsciously placed Jiang Lanjian as a master equal to the seven direct disciples.

Of the remaining people, several of them were great figures within their factions. As long as they had enough resources, they were hopeful in breaking through to the Xiantian realm!

There were seven direct disciples, three to four top core disciples, and several other influential core disciples. Altogether, this was 18 people in total.

The 19th person was Zhang Yanzhao. He came from the Zhang Family, one of the 16 martial cultivation families. The Zhang Family had a staggering history that reached back 3000 years; it was said that the first Head of the Zhang Family who created his family foundation with his own hands was a Revolving Core master! But regardless of their past, the Zhang Family had greatly declined since their heydays. Still, they maintained their deep heritage and legacy. The Zhang Family had two Xiantian realm masters that led their family, even the Seven Profound Valleys had

to give some respect to the Zhang Family.

# Chapter 257 – Shield Of Thunder

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The last person of those 20 was naturally Lin Ming.

Compared to the 19 disciples in front of him, Lin Ming was extremely ordinary. He came from an ordinary family and lived an ordinary life. Yet Lin Ming aroused an enormous interest from everyone.

In particular, the upper echelons of the Seven Profound Valleys. They had already been briefed on all of Lin Ming's information. For a 16 year old to have such a performance in the Total Faction Martial Meeting was rare even in the last 200 years!

At this time, the sun hadn't risen. Dawn was just around the corner, and yet there were already crowds of people gathered on the square of the Seven Profound Valleys' Grand Hall.

The various elders of the small sects in the Seven Profound territory, the 16 group leaders of the martial cultivation families, the various Martial House Masters and nobles of the 36 countries, and other great characters were gathered in the square. Any of these characters would be grand figures if placed within a small country; their existence itself would earn the admiration of millions. But here, these people weren't even allowed to sit in the front row, much less go into the Grand Hall.

"This year's Total Faction Martial Meeting should have the most skilled disciples in nearly the last three centuries!" In the audience, Huoluo Nation's Martial House Master Luo was sipping some tea.

As the Martial House Master of a large country, he had been given preferential treatment. He had a table by his side, some tea to drink, and also some dried fruits to nibble on.

“Hehe, definitely. Didn’t Divine Phoenix Island send out a messenger? They really are giving face to our Seven Profound Valleys. Usually Peacock Mountain brags so much, but they’ve never had someone from a fourth-grade sect attend their own Martial Meeting!”

“Divine Phoenix Island?” Martial House Master Luo stirred his tea as he slowly said, “I heard a rumor from someone that Divine Phoenix Island came here for a specific reason, not to especially watch our Total Faction Martial Meeting...”

“Hm, I don’t know. Hey, what rank do you think your Huoluo Nation’s Wang Mu will reach?”

“Uh...” The sudden question caused Martial House Master Luo to nearly choke on his tea. Wang Mu had ultimately failed to even enter the second tier, and what distressed him the most was that Huoluo Nation also had to compensate with their Seraphic Pond...

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The sun finally began to rise over the horizon. The referee of the final tournament was already standing in the center of the martial stage. This person had a cultivation at the middle Xiantian realm, and was also one of the Inner Court elders of the Seven Profound Valleys.

“I won’t repeat the rules of the competition – they are the same as the group stage qualifiers. There are altogether 30 people in the first tier finals. Everyone will have at least 29 matches. Those with the least points at the end will face a challenge from those in the second tier with the most points. This means that you may or may not still be in the top 30 ranks.

“Now, let the finals begin!”

The elder referee’s voice was very loud and clear; the entire mountain valley resounded with his voice.

“Lin Ming, do your best and try hard to enter the top 10. If you’re up against an opponent you cannot defeat, don’t try to be brave and get yourself hurt.” Qin Ziya repeatedly advised Lin Ming as they headed to the contestant waiting area. Although it was against the rules to kill or disable your opponent, if the strength of the two contestants were similar, then they would have to fight the battle with everything they had. In such a situation it would be very difficult to control one’s strength, and it wasn’t uncommon to be severely injured.

“I understand.”

Lin Ming moved towards the contestant waiting area and sat patiently in a chair. The first match soon began. A core disciple and a non-seeded player walked on stage. Although this was a fierce competition between two individuals, the audience seemed to be a bit disappointed, they most wanted to watch a match

between the direct disciples.

As the battle on the stage was intensely unfolding, Lin Ming saw an extremely handsome and good looking man walking over to him. This stylish and suave looking man was holding a fan, and had a hint of a disdainful sneer on his face.

Lin Ming furrowed his eyebrows, he didn't recognize this person.

“Are you Lin Ming?”

“Yes!”

“I am Ouyang Zifeng, a core disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys' Acacia Faction.”

“I don't think I know you?”

“...It doesn't matter whether or not you know me, it's enough that I know you. Because of you, my little brother will miss his chance to participate in this important Total Faction Martial Meeting.”

As this handsome young man said this, Lin Ming suddenly remembered back to his time at Desert Flower Hall. He had been dining with Qin Xingxuan when a fight had broken out. In the end, he had used his Samsara martial intent to injure an Acacia Faction disciple whose last name was also Ouyang. So it seems he was this person's younger brother.



However, at that time Lin Ming had actually gone very easy on him. The reason that Ouyang Ziyun had been injured so heavily was because he wasn't able to control his own ability – the Purple Flame Bone Lance. After his ability was broken, the true essence that he had gathered caused a backlash which resulted in him being injured.

Feeling Ouyang Zifeng's reckless and sharp hostility, Lin Ming coldly said, "The reason that your little brother was injured so miserably was because he tried to use an ability he couldn't control and got struck by his own backlash. It has nothing to do with me."

"Nothing to do with you? Humph, if it wasn't for you attacking him, how could my little brother lose control of his Purple Flame Bone Lance!!?"

"Then what you are saying is that I should extend my neck out and let your little brother attack me however he wants? What if I wasn't strong enough and couldn't deal with the Purple Flame Bone Lance? Wouldn't I be burned to ashes? In Desert Flower Hall, I didn't even bother him or provoke him, and yet he had to use the Purple Flame Bone Lance which he could not control in order to kill me. If he really killed me, then the most severe punishment would be getting grounded for a month or two. But if I killed him, then I must pay with my life. How arrogant and domineering must you Seven Profound Valleys disciples be!"

Ouyang Zifeng laughed viciously and said, "This world has only been decided by strength! Those who are strong make the rules! I am stronger than you, thus I make the rules!"

“You think you are stronger than me?”

“You’ll find out soon enough. Our match is the fourth, it will soon start!” Ouyang Zifeng said as he turned and strode away. He had already looked at the competition schedule ahead of time, and knew that he would encounter Lin Ming in the first round.

At the time that Ouyang Zifeng left, the match onstage had already come to a conclusion.

“Second match, Zhang Yanzhao against Yan Yandong!”

As the referee’s voice fell, the audience members that came from the 16 martial cultivation families let loose ringing cheers. Zhang Yanzhao was the final representative of all 16 martial families. During this Total Faction Martial Meeting, he had already reached the top 20; he had great chances of reaching the top 10!

His opponent Yan Yandong had already lost two matches in the second group stage. Against someone who was still undefeated, even though the match hadn’t yet ended, the results were already expected.

Cha!

Zhang Yanzhao extracted the thick saber he had strapped to his back. Yan Yandong pulled out a small array flag. As he waved it, a hundred golden symbols flew into the air.

“Demon Locking Array!”

The golden symbols flew towards Zhang Yanzhao like a locust swarm. Zhang Yanzhao took a sudden step forwards, and his entire body exploded with sound, “Dragon Tiger Slayer!”

His saber slashed out, its momentum like a dragon and a tiger. The surrounding true essence in the air stirred together like a raging storm of destruction, and those golden symbols that flew in the air were like snowflakes that fell into a furnace – they instantly melted away!

Peng!

The first saber strike destroyed Yan Yandong’s array, and the second saber strike broke apart Yan Yandong’s bodily true essence protection. The aftermath from that strike was already enough to angrily send Yan Yandong flying backwards.

Yan Yandong’s bodily true essence protection had been cleanly broken apart, but he himself wasn’t injured at all. Obviously, the degree of strength control that Zhang Yanzhao possessed was extremely formidable.

The different in their strength was just too great.

“Zhang Yanzhao is truly fierce!”

“I think that our 16 martial families’ Zhang Yanzhao isn’t any worse than the direct disciples of the Seven Factions!”

The ones who were speaking were the disciples of the 16 martial families. As they spoke up, a Seven Profound Valleys disciple that was sitting at their side contemptuously smiled and said, “That’s only because you haven’t experienced the strength of the direct disciples for yourself. If Zhang Yanzhao met Ouyang Ming or even Jiang Baoyun, then he would be defeated in five moves.”

“Five moves? Heh, I really want to laugh! You Seven Profound Valleys disciples brag to the point of not knowing what you’re talking about.”

“Wait and see for yourself, then don’t end up crying!”

The Seven Profound Valleys disciple curled his lips and didn’t speak any further.

At the third match, there wasn’t anyone important.

Fourth match, Lin Ming against Ouyang Zifeng!

Ouyang Zifeng was the third ranked disciple of the Acacia Faction, and he also was undefeated from the group stages.

Lin Ming was naturally undefeated too. But, in the opinion of the general audience, Lin Ming may be a genius, but the difference between him and one of the seven direct disciples was simply too

great. During the qualifying stages, Lin Ming had defeated Jing Chanyu in two moves. However, this didn't really raise anyone's opinion of him. After all, Jing Chanyu didn't have much chances of ending up in the top 20. Thus, defeating Jing Chanyu didn't mean much.

However, the upper echelon of the Seven Profound Valleys was watching this match with rapt attention, eyes glued to the stage. They were especially looking forward to seeing Lin Ming in action. This Lin Ming was just too young!

In particular, the Seven Profound Valleys Valley Master Shi Zongtian had already ordered an investigation into Lin Ming's entire last three generations of family. After receiving the report back, Shi Zongtian was simply startled out of his mind. Lin Ming had actually come from an extremely ordinary background, and he was a typical common martial artist. It was simply inconceivable that he could have such amazing results!

After Ouyang Zifeng walked onstage, many disciples began to immediately cheer, especially those female disciples who didn't have much talent for martial arts, they screamed until their voices were hoarse and could scream no longer. Because of their limited martial talent, they always vainly dreamed of marrying a core disciple. However, the core disciples of the Sword Faction and Refiner Faction pursued their martial arts path wholeheartedly, and most simply weren't lured by the pleasures of the flesh. There was just no chance of these girls being able to attract one of them. Thus the disciples of the Acacia Faction were the most sought after.

Compared to Ouyang Zifeng, there were far less cheers for Lin Ming. There just weren't that many disciples of the 36 countries present.

Ouyang Zifeng and Lin Ming stood 100 feet apart from each other.

Ouyang Zifeng sneered and said, "I heard that you can control the power of thunder. I advise you not to try and hide any cards in your hand, and to use whatever moves you have when you can. Otherwise, you won't have the opportunity to."

"I never intended to hide any cards. I just use what I need to when I need to."

"Haha, you are also arrogant beyond arrogant! Up until now, there has only been one person who has managed to force me into using my sword. I wonder if you also have the ability to force me into using my sword?"

As Ouyang Zifeng said this, he traced his spatial ring and took out a blue longsword. The sword was inserted into a scabbard that was made from snake skin. It looked simple, but it exuded a very light true essence fluctuation. Obviously, this scabbard was some sort of extraordinary treasure.

Lin Ming faintly smiled. Force you to draw your sword? Let's see if you can force me to draw my spear!

Samsara martial intent!

Lin Ming's eyes suddenly turned into two black vortexes. He was trying to come to a deeper understanding of his Samsara martial intent. Even if he didn't expect his Samsara martial intent to defeat his opponent, he would still use it in order to gain some more insights into his martial intent.

Ouyang Zifeng had already expected that Lin Ming would use a soul attack. With a sneer, the scabbard in his hand began to fiercely tremble, and the sound of a wailing ghost cry began to emit outwards. A massive number of green ghosts suddenly emerged from the sword blade and circled around Ouyang Zifeng. These ghosts seemed to be formed of a chilling air, as if they were enough to freeze a person's soul.

As Lin Ming's soul attack struck, it was completely blocked by these ghosts.

Peng peng peng!

As a ghost was stuck by the soul attack, it would inflate like a balloon and then burst apart. But as this ghost died, a new one would emerge to take its place. Lin Ming had killed over a dozen ghosts with his first attack, but he still hadn't been able to harm Ouyang Zifeng.

“Humph! Although the power of my soul force is inferior to yours, your soul attacks are useless against me! These ghosts are condensed from the Yin Qi that I've refined within my body. Every

time you disperse one, they will just re-enter my body. After they are nourished by my true essence, they will reform endlessly!

“If you can only use soul attacks, then you truly disappoint me.”

As Ouyang Zifeng said this, a purple flame began to cover his entire body, as if his body was drowning in an inferno. This flame sprang dozens of feet high, and soon Ouyang Zifeng was completely enveloped within it. What was strange was that this purple flame wasn't burning hot. Instead, it exuded a bone chilling energy. The tiles underneath Ouyang Zifeng's feet began to ice over, spreading out with him at the center.

“Purple Flame Bone Lance...” Lin Ming easily recognized this ability. Back at Desert Flower Hall, Ouyang Ziyun had also moved this move, and thus he had suffered a major loss.

“My little brother used the Purple Flame Bone Lance and was defeated by you. Now, I will let you have a good look today and the true might of the Purple Flame Bone Lance!”

The purple flames on Ouyang Zifeng's arm condensed into a purple bone lance. From it, the sounds of wailing ghosts and tormented spirits echoed out. With Ouyang Zifeng's cultivation, he was able to display the true abilities of the Purple Flame Bone Lance.

“Die!”



Huuu—!

The bone lance shot out, quick as lightning! Blurred flames followed in its path, creating the afterimage of a trailing tail of burning purple fire! A loud explosive sound pierced the air mixed with the weeping sounds of ghosts, scratching upon the eardrums of those nearby.

Sou—!

Lin Ming was directly pierced by the bone lance!

The audience didn't even have time to respond. Ouyang Zifeng fiendishly grinned. You want to dodge this move? You are too naïve!

The 'Lin Ming' that was pierced by that bone lance suddenly dissipated into shadow, it had only been an afterimage. At the same time, the bone lance suddenly changed directions, chasing Lin Ming's shadow!

“Divide!”

Ouyang Zifeng cried out, and suddenly the bone lance split into 12 shards. These 12 mini bone lances pierced towards Lin Ming from all angles – they could not be avoided!

“Ahh—!” The martial artists from the 36 countries couldn't help but cry out in alarm. Qin Ziya was even more nervous, both of his

hands were clenched together until they were white. In this level of confrontation, any accidental move and one could be seriously injured or even crippled!

Peng peng peng peng!

The 12 mini purple flame bone lances simultaneously struck Lin Ming, and a massive pyre of purple fire screeched into the sky; it was just like a gloriously blooming purple rose!

Ouyang Zifeng's lips curved up in a dark smile. All of the martial artists from the 36 countries were nervously waiting with breath abated.

Qin Xingxuan's hands were covered with sweat; as to what the limit of Lin Ming's power was, she did not know.

However, after the purple flames faded away, Ouyang Zifeng's smile faded along with them.

Lin Ming was firmly standing on the martial stage, not even his clothes had been burnt. Around his body, massive purple snakes of electricity crackled as they writhed around his body, dancing, coiling, completely surrounding him.

Ouyang Zifeng's face suddenly sank.

To use the power of thunder as a shield!?

If Lin Ming could use the power of thunder to block his Purple Flame Bone Lance, then that proved that Lin Ming's thunder origin energy fusion compatibility had reached an extremely high level. It was enough to break his Yin Qi and threaten him.

# Chapter 258 – Strike Of Thunder

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“Lin Ming can actually control the power of thunder!”

“He is a thunder-attribute martial artist, this is his hidden card!”

“Look how thick those electric snakes are; that’s probably a fifth, or even sixth-grade fusion.”

The audience discussed amongst themselves. To the disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys, a thunder-attribute martial artist wasn’t too rare. What was rare was a sixth-grade fusion thunder-attribute martial artist.

In the Grand Hall of the Seven Profound Valleys, Mu Qinghong smiled as she looked at the electric snakes that coiled round Lin Ming, “This little kid actually waited until the finals to use the power of thunder.”

At this point, she was completely positive of Lin Ming’s identity. According to the description from Mu Qianyu, Lin Ming’s symbol was his power of thunder. Mu Qianyu speculated that Lin Ming’s thunder origin energy fusion compatibility was no less amazing than hers – it was seventh-grade or above!

This was simply a monstrous talent!

Regardless of whether it was Lin Ming’s martial intent or his combat ability that allowed him to jump realms when fighting, just

his talent in thunder-attribute origin energy was enough for a large sect to raise him with massive amounts of resources.

Mu Qinghong shot a glance at Shi Zongtian sitting by her side. He didn't seem to have any special reaction. Mu Qinghong's mouth curved in a smile. If Shi Zongtian knew that Lin Ming controlled a Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder level Thunder Soul, then he probably would be shocked out of his seat.

In the center of the martial stage, Lin Ming's entire body was wrapped in electric snakes. His hair wantonly danced in the wind; he looked just like a demonic war god that crashed down from the heavens in a hail of thunderous fury.

“The power of thunder is the absolute counter to ghosts and Yin energy. Every time you use your Acacia Faction's cultivation methods, the crying ghosts you produce will be restrained by my power. I'd like to see just how you'll stop this!”

Lin Ming's eyes flashed with a cold light, and the lightning twined endlessly around his body in a dazzling purple visual display, he was just like a purple sun!

Golden Roc Shattering the Void!

Lin Ming instantly reached the limit of his speed!

On the martial stage, Lin Ming soared around, a series of shadows following in his wake. In every shadow, there were purple

arcs of thunder that sparkled within!

Zi zi zi!

The savage power of thunder was like a vorpal sword as it stabbed towards Ouyang Zifeng.

Zheng!

Ouyang Zifeng pulled out his treasure sword from the snake skin scabbard. This treasure sword was four feet long and completely blood red.

Ouyang Zifeng had drawn his sword!

Ouyang Zifeng believed in his own ability. There was only one person who had managed to force him to draw his sword, and that was at the finale of the battle. But now, Lin Ming had managed to do so in just one move, and Ouyang Zifeng was unable to shoulder the result. Not to mention not drawing his sword, even if he did, he might not be able to block this strike.

Ouyang Zifeng also rushed forwards at the limit of his speed. The sharp sword and power of thunder collided again and again in fiercely brutal strikes!

Peng peng peng!

The audience could only see the blurred shadows of two people, and the flashing of purple lightning on the stage!

“What’s happening onstage? Who’s winning?”

“I don’t know. Since Lin Ming can force Ouyang Zifeng to draw his sword, then he has some ability. Lin Ming shouldn’t be much inferior to Ouyang Zifeng. He might be able to persist for some time.”

“Inferior? Persist for some time? You think that our 36 countries’ Lin Ming is inferior? You idiot, just wait and see, Ouyang Zifeng is nothing but a side dish!”

The one who refuted was a martial artist from the 36 countries. These past days, the martial artists of the 36 countries had been bullied by the Seven Profound Valleys. Now that they had an opportunity to be proud and gloat, they naturally would not miss it.

“Humph. It’s too early for you to be happy. Even if Ouyang Zifeng cannot defeat Lin Ming, they won’t differ by much. Wait for our direct disciples to go onstage and then you will know what it means to despair!”

Hearing the title of the seven direct disciples, the martial artist from the 36 countries couldn’t say anything. The seven direct disciples were simply too formidable. Even though he had full confidence in Lin Ming, he didn’t believe Lin Ming could defeat them. The martial artist mumbled some more trash talk and then

no longer spoke.

On the martial stage, Ouyang Zifeng was only defending, not attacking at all. It wasn't that he didn't want to go on the offensive, it was that he couldn't. Any Yin Qi that he gathered around him was instantly dispelled by the lightning shocks. In this fierce battle, his true essence reserves were quickly depleting.

“This fellow is releasing so much power of thunder, his energy consumption rate has to be higher than mine. As long as I can last a bit longer, the one who loses won't be me!”

Ouyang Zifeng had just thought of this idea when Lin Ming suddenly sarcastically said, “You can only hide? I'm waiting for your so-called ‘hidden card’. If you don't use it now, you might not have the opportunity to use it later.”

Lin Ming's right hand suddenly formed into a fist. Thick purple electric snakes completely gathered on his fist, forming a blinding purple light. 5000 vibrating true essence filaments violently surged outwards, interweaving with the power of thunder and transforming into a deep purple.

This was the union of Body Tearing Bone Shattering Fist and the power of thunder!

“Insolence!” Ouyang stimulated his true essence, and a purple flame shot up his longsword. The wails of ghosts emitted from the sword blade.



“Nether Strike!”

Ouyang Zifeng suppressed the numb feeling that the power of lightning was causing and stabbed out with his sword. A horrible-looking ghost face appeared on the purple flaming blade piercing towards Lin Ming.

Lin Ming didn't even glance at it, he only punched out.

Bang!

5000 pure purple vibrating true essence filaments rushed forwards like vicious Purple Flood Dragons. They crashed into the ghostly face, directly shredding it to bits!

Right after, the purple thunder-imbued true essence broke open Ouyang Zifeng's protective Yin Qi, and then sunk into his body, overwhelming him.

Ouyang Zifeng's body shook, and he vomited a mouthful of blood. He was sent soaring back dozens of feet into the air, tumbling back even after he landed. He was finally able to barely stop himself as he knelt down on his knees, propping himself up with his sword and wiping the blood from his mouth.

In that moment, Ouyang Zifeng felt as if his entire body was being torn apart; he almost thought he would die.

Lin Ming stretched out his hand, and purple true essence ran out

from Ouyang Zifeng's body, returning to his hand. After he had absorbed the Purple Blood Dragon Divine Thunder, he had gained the ability to consciously imbue his true essence with the power of thunder. Of course, he could also contain the power of thunder within his Body Tearing Bone Shattering Fist.

“Lin Ming, victory!”

The referee Elder looked deeply at Lin Ming as he announced the result. If Lin Ming could defeat Ouyang Zifeng, that proved he had an enormous chance to reach the top 10!

For a 16 year old boy from the 36 countries, this was a result that both shocked and terrified everyone.

Lin Ming turned around to leave the martial stage.

Lin Ming fought Ouyang Zifeng for a short period of time, but ultimately Lin Ming won by overwhelming superior power.

“Ouyang Zifeng was also defeated! Will a country bumpkin martial artist from the 36 countries really reach the top ten rankings!?”

“This fellow already injured Ouyang Zifeng's little brother Ouyang Ziyun at Desert Flower Hall, to the point where he couldn't participate in the competition. Now he has defeated Ouyang Zifeng. He is really bullying them to the extreme, his bullying has even reached their front door!”

Seeing the chances of Lin Ming reaching the top 10 increase, many disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys were either unwilling or unconvinced of seeing this happen. Most of them had been born in the Seven Profound Valleys; they had an innate sense of superiority and looked down on martial artists from the 36 countries and 16 martial families.

But now, they had been eliminated and yet there was some damn boy from the 36 countries that actually wanted to compete for the top 10. This was just like a Crown Prince who was suddenly slapped by an upstart brat that came from a village.

It had to be known that being in the top 10 of the Total Faction Martial Meeting meant great honor and enormous rewards. This also meant that later they would obtain the valuable resources and vigorous support of the sect. This was a situation that many disciples longed for in their dreams.

If they could become a core disciple, not only would their cultivation grow by leaps and bounds, but they would be able to freely choose from the beautiful female disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys. Perhaps because of true essence tempering their bodies, a female martial artist with martial talent would have an exquisite beauty. Especially the disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys' Mirage Faction and Zither Faction; their beauty was simply startling and much more charming and alluring than those rouge covered women of the common land.

They wouldn't mind or say anything if one of the seven direct disciples or a core disciple was in the top 10, but now a country

bumpkin martial artist from the 36 countries also wanted to reach the top 10.

The top 10 ranking disciples were destined to enter the Total Faction and qualify as core disciples. These disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys could only think that in the future, Lin Ming would divide their resources and enjoy their women, how could they swallow this feeling?

This was called envy, jealousy, hatred, and was the best way to portray the current feelings running through their hearts.

“Just wait. His climb up won’t last much longer. The Acacia Faction’s direct disciple Ouyang Ming is good friends with Ouyang Zifeng. He will definitely help Ouyang Zifeng return this favor. If Lin Ming is seriously injured, I want to see just how he will struggle for the top 10.”

Those that were eliminated by a direct disciple could only curse in their hearts and accept their fate. The Seven Profound Valleys’ disciples hoped that Lin Ming would be so injured that he couldn’t fight again.

After Lin Ming left, the referee announced the next match – Jiang Lanjian against Sun Lin.

With this, the entire audience began to seethe with excitement. This was in stark contrast to the tepid reaction that Lin Ming had received a moment ago. In the Seven Profound Valleys, Jiang Lanjian’s reputation was no less than those of the seven direct

disciples. There were also many people that thought he was superior to some of the weaker direct disciples. For instance, they believed he was stronger than the Refiner Faction's Han Yanluo, or the Array Faction's Fang Qi.

After all, the Refiner Faction and Array Faction had to spend a massive amount of time and effort on their auxiliary skills. Their cultivation methods weren't as powerful in terms of combat; they were best applied towards refining and array formations. Because of this, they could not compare to Jiang Lanjian who walked the path of swordsmanship and pursued the strongest offensive power.

Jiang Lanjian walked onstage. He wore the black clothes he constantly wore, and he carried a three foot six inch treasure sword. As he stood at the center of the martial stage, it was as if he were a bright sword, gleaming cold and emitting a threatening combative air!

Jiang Lanjian's opponent Sun Lin was from the Refiner Faction. He was the second ranked disciple of the Refiner Faction's younger generation, only inferior to the direct disciple, Han Yanluo.

Sun Lin had participated in the last Total Faction Martial Meeting and had reached rank 22.

Now, his cultivation had increased and he entered the finals undefeated. During this Martial Meeting he would undoubtedly reach the top 20. He even had some hopes of reaching the top 10.

“Sword Faction disciple Jiang Lanjian, please advise.” Regardless

of who he faced, Jiang Lanjian would always perform a polite sword ceremony before a match.

“Senior-apprentice Brother Jiang, please advise. I’ve made enormous progress these last three years, I won’t be so easy to deal with.” Sun Lin smiled as he said this. To maintain a smile in front of Jiang Lanjian was also a form of great self-confidence.

As Sun Lin spoke, he extracted a claymore from his spatial ring. This claymore was colored like burning flames, and was four feet long. As the sword was pulled out from its scabbard, a shimmering flame ignited on the blade, a torrid heat wave rolling outwards. Some of those that were close in the audience couldn’t help but step back.

“Just the heat wave itself has so much power. This Sun Lin is also not ordinary, he might not even be any worse than that Lin Ming from a moment ago.”

“This year’s Total Faction Martial Meeting is truly bursting with talent. Not only are their two talents from the 36 countries and 16 martial families, but even our Seven Profound Valleys’ talents have surpassed the past.”

## Chapter 259 – Puppet Faction

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“Look at how scorching hot the flames on Sun Lin’s sword are, maybe his Hollow Flame Essence has already been strengthened to the 1000 year rank! It’s just too abnormal.

A Flame Essence was an immortal fire that would never extinguish, but a Hollow Flame Essence was not. If a Hollow Flame Essence wasn’t augmented with fire origin energy for a long enough period of time, then the Hollow Flame Essence would gradually weaken until it finally withered into nothingness.

Of course, the more powerful a Hollow Flame Essence was, the longer it would take until it began to fade away. As for a weak Hollow Flame Essence, a 1000 year rank meant that it could naturally exist in perpetuity for 1000 years after a supply of fire origin energy was cut off from it.

1000 years was a fairly long period of time; the Seven Profound Valleys only had a heritage of 600 years.

Even for the core disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys who had a massive amount of resources, a Flame Essence was extremely extravagant, to the point of being unattainable. Having a 1000 year rank Hollow Flame Essence was a high honor.

“How many moves do you think it will take for Senior-apprentice Brother Jiang to win?”

“Not sure. I think around 10 moves, or it could even go up to 20!”

Although Sun Lin had showed a considerable improvement in strength, the disciples present still favored Jiang Lanjian as before.

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“Senior-apprentice Brother Jiang! Take my move, Violent Flame Rising Heat!”

On the martial stage, Sun Lin struck out with his most famous technique. The sound of whistling flames and a roaring combustion filled the air, and a rain of crimson flames surged forth from Sun Lin’s blade, covering the skies before rolling towards Jiang Lanjian! What was strange was that these flames didn’t form snakes of fire like normal flames would, but instead condensed into sharp arrows of fire!

“Abyssal Flames, it’s the high-grade human-step Abyssal Flames! Sun Lin actually managed to get his hands on this kind of fire in order to nourish his Hollow Flame Essence!” A disciple of the Refiner Faction couldn’t help but cry out in jealousy as his eyes filled with envy and greed. Obviously, the Abyssal Flames had given him a great shock. This sort of high-grade human-step flame was definitely not something that Sun Lin would have been able to obtain by himself. There was only one possibility: that this was granted to him by the Refiner Faction.

This was the privilege and advantage that a core disciple held. A common disciple would never in a hundred years be given such a high-grade human-step flame to refine into their Hollow Flame Essence.



Facing this crimson rain of fire, Jiang Lanjian was calm as usual as he pulled his longsword out of its scabbard. This deep green blade was three fingers wide, and seemed simple and unthreatening. It was just like a long leek leaf, completely unremarkable.

“Sword to the Cloudy Sky!”

Jiang Lanjian slashed out with his sword, his movements so fast that his hands were nothing but a blur. There was only a green flash of light, as if a green dragon was soaring into the sky!

The sword energy brutally struck the rain of fire arrows, and with a series of popping sounds, the rain of crimson fire vanished in the air!

The aftermath created a brilliant bloom of sparks just like a hail of summer fireworks that obscured the audience’s eyes. Before the audience even had a chance to react, Jiang Lanjian’s blade shot forth. This blade whistled with a sharp explosive sound as it thrust towards Sun Lin’s chest!

“Violent Flame Wall!”

Sun Lin was surprised. He hadn’t expected his Violent Flame Rising Heat to injure Jiang Lanjian, but he also hadn’t expected his move to be so easily broken. As Sun Lin retreated in a panic, he threw up walls of flame that surrounded him.

Hu hu hu!

Three consecutive walls of flame rose into the air in front of him, each more vibrant than the last. Massive tongues of crimson flames shot out dozens of feet into the sky!

“Break!”

Jiang Lanjian slashed out with his longsword, and the sword energy cut straight through with a peerless momentum, completely dividing all three flame walls and even the martial stage! Jiang Lanjian slashed out one more time with his sword, and all of the flames were then blown out by the sword wind!

Jiang Lanjian's speed instantly peaked to the extreme; in the next moment, a green form had already appeared in front of Sun Lin.

Sun Lin's face instantly paled!

Sword light rose up!

Peng!

Sun Lin's bodily true essence protection was broken, and he was sent flying off stage, his face pallid.

Once Jiang Lanjian had approached him, Sun Lin didn't have any

chances of being able to resist. After all, he was just a disciple of the Refiner Faction. Although he used a sword, he couldn't be considered a swordsman. His sword was more of an instrument that was used to display his flame attacks. But Jiang Lanjian was different; his sword was his lifeblood, his most cherished possession and friend. With sword and human united as one, there was no path he could not tread!

“Jiang Lanjian, victory!”

The referee Elder was also surprised. Three sword moves to defeat the enemy. And Sun Lin wasn't some weakling either, but he had lost so thoroughly!

Jiang Lanjian's strength was too terrifying. If nothing went wrong, then his strength already surpassed even some of the direct disciples!

It had to be known that he wasn't even the direct disciple of the Sword Faction.

How powerful was the Sword Faction's number one master of the younger generation, Jiang Baoyun?

It was simply unimaginable!

In the audience, the ordinary disciples were shaken with awe. Jiang Lanjian was too formidable. Even the direct disciple of the Array Faction, Fang Qi, had an ugly complexion. If that was Jiang

Lanjian's complete strength that he had displayed a moment ago, then Fang Qi would be able to barely deal with it. But if it wasn't, then he was in a dangerous situation!

If he, as one of the seven direct disciples, lost to the second ranked disciple of the Sword Faction, then he would lose too much face.

It wasn't only Fang Qi. Ouyang Ming and Huan Xiaodie also weren't looking too well. For now, these two weren't worrying about Jiang Lanjian. Instead, they were thinking about Jiang Baoyun. Although they may not have a grasp on Jiang Lanjian's true strength, the Sword Faction certainly would. If such a fierce disciple like Jiang Lanjian was only the second ranked disciple, then that proved that Jiang Baoyun was stronger than Jiang Lanjian.

“Good! Very good!”

At this time, Ouyang Ming suddenly heard a gloomy cackling voice sound out that made his scalp tingle. He turned his head and saw a razor-thin youth whose body was like a stick of wood, and completely covered in bandages, slyly grinning.

Seeing this dried up mummy suddenly appear at his side, Ouyang Ming felt very uncomfortable. He frowned, “Mugu Buyu, what're you smiling about?”

“Jejejeje, to have such an opponent, why would I not be excited.” The mummy stretched out his horrifyingly long tongue to lick his

lips, his eyes shining with a strange light. He was just like a dried up vampire that saw a tasty prey, it really made one shudder looking at him.

This mummy had a very strange name. His surname was Mugu, and he was called Buyu. He was not someone from the South Horizon Region, but rather originated from the incomparably far extreme western region. 600 years ago, a man named Mugu Yanzhuo from the extreme western region came to the South Horizon Region's Seven Profound territory through a super long-distance transmission array. This man was the founder of the Seven Profound Valleys' Puppet Faction.

The Puppet Faction was the most mysterious and mystical faction within the Seven Profound Valleys. Every disciple of the Puppet Faction had one last name – Mugu. They never took in disciples that didn't share this name. Although they were a faction of the Seven Profound Valleys sect, in truth, they were more like a family clan.

The number of people within the Puppet Faction was scant even compared to the Zither Faction or Mirage Faction. The Puppet Faction only had a third of the population of either of those two factions.

But still, no other faction dared to look down or underestimate the Puppet Faction. This was because the combat prowess of the Puppet Faction disciples was too varied and powerful, not only that, but they were united in solidarity. During this Total Faction Martial Meeting, the Puppet Faction only sent out two disciples, one Mugu Buyu, and one Mugu Jirong. Both of these disciples had

swept past their groups with total victory. Of these two, Mugu Buyu was the direct disciple of the Puppet Faction. His moves and style was strange, peculiar, and his power was unpredictable – it simply could not be measured. Ouyang Ming would rather fight with Jiang Baoyun than deal with this freakish mummy.

Mugu Jirong wasn't much worse, he would definitely be able to firmly reach the top 10. Even the Array Faction's Fang Qi might not be Mugu Jirong's match.

The Puppet Faction was just too strange. Their faction had their beliefs and religion, and they seemed to worship some god that stemmed from the western region, everything they did was shrouded in mystery. Their faction was located a thousand miles away from the Seven Profound Valleys' highest peak, in the depths of the Profound Sky Mountain Range. That area was desolate and uninhabited, and wild packs of mighty vicious beasts roamed everywhere.

The Puppet Faction did not use the resources of the Seven Profound Valleys, and they also didn't turn in any resources to the Seven Profound Valleys. Occasionally, they would use some resources, but they would do so with equal exchange. It could be said that the Puppet Faction was a very strong independent entity that existed within the Seven Profound Valleys. They rarely contacted the other six factions. As for the orders of the Valley Master, they would listen but they might not follow.

Everyone within the Seven Profound Valleys understood one thing, that was that the disciples of the Puppet Faction could not be provoked. This wasn't just because they were powerful or

mysterious, but they were extremely serious in concealing their flaws.

If the Sword Faction was the most powerful offensive faction within the Seven Profound Valleys, then the Puppet Faction was the most difficult to deal with. No one wished to fight them. This wasn't only because of their strange abilities, but moreover, once you were killed, there was a very high chance you would be turned into a puppet.

This was the reason why even someone as prominent and glorious as Ouyang Ming felt creeped out and his scalp tingle when he saw Mugu Buyu. He knew that the bag that Mugu Buyu carried with him was made from the skin of a Xiantian realm master, and that there was also a human puppet sleeping within that was made from the corpse of a peak Houtian realm master.

“Jiang Baoyun, you have bad luck now.”

Mugu Buyu licked his lips as he looked at Jiang Baoyun. As Ouyang Ming saw this, he felt gleeful. Ouyang Ming didn't have full confidence he could defeat Jiang Baoyun. And against this freakish fellow who didn't seem like a human or a ghost, he was even less sure. If these two fought and wounded each other, that would be the happiest win-win situation for him.

After Jiang Lanjian's match, three consecutive direct disciples went on stage. All of them were able to defeat their opponents in three moves or less. At this time, the atmosphere of the martial artists in the audience was reaching a furious climax.

The seven direct disciples had a sky-high popularity. As Qin Wuxin walked on stage, the martial field resounded with shouts and cries from lovestruck men.

“Qin Wuxin will win!”

“Senior-apprentice Sister Qin, you can do it!”

“Senior-apprentice Qin, I love you!”

.....

All sorts of loud and chaotic sounds and voices echoed, but Qin Wuxin only held her zither as she stood there, simply unaffected by her surroundings. She was wearing a pure white dress, and as a cool wind breezed past her, it sent her dress fluttering in the wind. From top to bottom, she emitted an otherworldly aura.

Her opponent was Jing Chanyu. Jing Chanyu’s face was covered with the veil like before, and she was wearing a bright yellow dress, looking like a quiet untouched beauty.

As these two beauties with different styles stood together, it naturally attracted the attention of many, many, many men. To them, the fight itself was less important than being able to see two such exquisite women.



“You are not my match.” Qin Wuxin said with indifference.

“I know. But since I’ve entered the first tier, I naturally will not miss the opportunity to fight the direct disciples.” Jing Chanyu proudly raised her head. Although she had been completely defeated by Fang Qi, she still wasn’t depressed. She was confident that in the future she would be able to catch up with them a step at a time, until she finally surpassed them.

But now, what she wanted to know was just how wide the gap was between them and her.

“Then... let me fulfill your wish!” Qin Wuxin said with a impassive expression. “Listen to the melody of my zither.”

Her delicate fingers touched upon the long strings of her zither, and heavenly notes began to flow forth like a mountain stream, resonating in the air.

## Chapter 260 – Allow Me Three Moves?

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The sweet dulcet tones of the zither echoed crisply onstage. Even those people that were sitting in the Seven Profound Valleys' Grand Hall were able to clearly hear the melody.

“Why the hell would I want to listen to your zither music!?” Jing Chanyu coldly snorted and sealed off her ears with true essence.

She didn't need to be a genius to know that there was something strange about this zither music. Jing Chanyu pushed her true essence to the extreme. Facing someone like Qin Wuxin, she had to have the mindset of going all out from the start, otherwise even the smallest chance of resisting would slip through her fingers.

The thick yellow defensive barrier surrounded her. Jing Chanyu hadn't even moved. Her palm was like a saber, she was preparing to use the Halcyon Reflection Great Wisdom Palm. This was also the strongest instant martial skill in her repertoire.

However, just as she was ready to strike out, her body suddenly froze. Her eyes opened incredibly wide. The absolute defense that she was proud of and had poured all of her true essence into suddenly began to inexplicably crack. A single crack had just appeared, and then it instantly covered her entire defense.

Peng!

There was a loud shattering sound, and her tenacious defensive shell was shattered like brittle glass thrown to the floor. Particles

of her lingering true essence began to float down.

Jing Chanyu was shocked. Her true essence protection was broken and yet she hadn't even been attacked. She didn't even know what sort of attack was used to shatter her defense. All she could hear were the tempting melodies still ringing in her ears, just like a gentle mountain stream; there wasn't a hint of murderous intent at all. But yet her defensive barrier had instantly cracked like an elephant stepping on a fragile eggshell.

Did the attack come from the gentle zither sounds?

"I... I admit defeat!" Jing Chanyu closed both her eyes and bitterly smiled.

She had only wanted to see how great the disparity was between them, but now it seemed as if she wasn't even able to estimate the gap.

From the beginning to the end, Qin Wuxin had only inadvertently glanced at her, there weren't even any true essence fluctuations from her body! Although Jing Chanyu knew that she would definitely lose, she didn't imagine she would lose in a way where she hadn't even been able to perceive her opponent's attack.

"Qin Wuxin, victory!"

The referee announced with no suspense.

Lin Ming inhaled a deep breath of cold air. This Qin Wuxin was simply too terrifying.

Lin Ming had an extremely formidable perception, he was able to keenly capture each and every true essence fluctuation in the air. Qin Wuxin's precision and control of her true essence was enough to make his blood boil! It was simply outrageous!

Even though Lin Ming knew Flow like Silk, and had achieved a nuanced level of control over his true essence, he had to admit that even he couldn't achieve something like what Qin Wuxin did.

Qin Wuxin had fused true essence into her sound waves and focused the full force of that to attack Jing Chanyu's protective barrier, instantly crushing it. Her true essence didn't even have the least bit of spillover, so Jing Chanyu hadn't been injured. Most people probably wouldn't even have noticed anything strange.

"The Zither Faction's cultivation method really surprised me!" Lin Ming knew that a sound wave was in truth a form of vibration. If true essence was contained in the sound wave, that meant that the true essence would vibrate!

This was achieving the exact same result as the 'Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians' Flow like Silk, but only with a different method!

Flow like Silk was to adjust the breathing rate of all the tiny units in the body and cause one's true essence to vibrate.

But the Zither Faction's cultivation method was to integrate true essence to the acoustic vibrations, and achieve the effect of true essence vibration along the sound waves.

From this point, the Zither Faction's cultivation method manual was far inferior to the 'Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians'. But to a certain extent, the Zither Faction's cultivation method was able to achieve a similar effect to Flow like Silk, for instance, ignoring all defensive barriers.

Lin Ming had used a fist to crush Jing Chanyu's defensive barrier.

Qin Wuxin was the same!

"I really can't underestimate the heroes of the world. Sky Spill Continent still has an inheritance of tens of thousands of years, naturally, countless geniuses must have emerged! Although they are far less profound and formidable than the Realm of the Gods', they aren't much worse in certain aspects!

As Lin Ming was thinking, he hadn't noticed that the first round of the finals was over, and the second round was soon beginning.

As for the first match, Lin Ming was in it.

"First match, Lin Ming against Fang Qi!"

When the referee announced the names of the contestants for the

first match, Lin Ming was surprised. Fang Qi was one of the seven direct disciples. Although he knew that the direct disciples of the Array Faction and Refiner Faction were the weakest of the seven, for better or worse he was still a direct disciple. He hadn't imagined that of the 29 matches, he would encounter a direct disciple on the second round.

Thinking this, Lin Ming wryly smiled and shook his head. This was normal. After all, he wasn't a seeded player so there was no way he would be left for the finals.

In his first few matches, he would inevitably run into direct disciples or someone on the level of Jiang Lanjian. Relatively speaking, starting out with Fang Qi was pretty nice too.

Fang Qi smiled as he looked at Lin Ming. "We missed each other in the group stage, but in the end, we play against each other in the second round. Your luck is quite bad to meet me here. It's already quite good that you can maintain your string of undefeated victories up to now. This round, there are only 15 people left that can claim total victory. Of course, your lucky run must now come to an end.

Lin Ming cheekily smiled, flashing his brilliant white teeth. "I think I'm quite lucky. I ran into you instead of someone good, like Jiang Baoyun or Ouyang Ming. This situation isn't too bad."

As soon as Fang Qi heard Lin Ming's taunt, his face immediately sank. He admitted that he was inferior to Jiang Baoyun and those like him, but even so, it wasn't up to some rural martial artist bumpkin from the 36 countries like Lin Ming to provoke him. Just

what sort of qualifications did he have to look down on him?

“Good! What an extremely arrogant tone! I had been prepared to show you some mercy on behalf of us having been in the same group, but now that you have so much confidence, don’t blame me if you are severely wounded!” Fang Qi coldly snorted, his feet moved, and then he appeared onstage.

The audience immediately roared with cheers and cries. In order to increase their momentum, the disciples of the Array Faction had even drawn up miniature voice amplifying array formations to increase the loudness of their cheers. This sort of small array formation was a piece of cake even for the minor Array Faction disciples. Naturally, Fang Qi’s cheers directly impacted into the sky, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to call them earth-shaking.

“Fang Qi! Fang Qi!”

“Fang Qi, you gotta win!”

Especially those disciples that were envious, jealous, and hateful of Lin Ming having the qualifications to compete for the top 10. These disciples were shouting out until their throats were sore.

“Kill him! Destroy him!”

“Ruin that loser!”

“Down with the country hick!”

This was the superiority of home field advantage. Standing on stage, Lin Ming had become public enemy number one. The weak cheers that came from the 36 countries' martial artists soon passed; even though they also came from the 36 countries, over 90% of them didn't believe that Lin Ming could win. The power, prestige, and fame that the title of direct disciple had acquired over time was just too heavy. Even Qin Ziya had a solemn expression, he hadn't thought that Lin Ming would encounter a direct disciple so soon.

At this moment, a true essence sound transmission rang in Lin Ming's ear, "You have to defeat him, please!"

Lin Ming turned around and was surprised to see the veiled Jing Chanyu standing 200 feet away, looking at him with wide eyes, full of hope and expectation for him. Lin Ming smiled, and glanced at the audience. He saw that many of martial artists from the 36 countries were staring at him, their fists tightly clenched, a similar look of hope and desire coloring their face.

They didn't cheer loudly like the disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys, but were instead quietly sitting there with fists gripped tight. Maybe it wasn't because they didn't want to cheer, but rather because they didn't have the energy and confidence to.

The martial artists from the 36 countries had an inferiority complex that was beat into their bones – it simply could not be erased!



The foundation and resources of the 36 countries were scarce, 90% of their resources had to be delivered as tribute to the Seven Profound Valleys!

How many martial artists had ended up with hidden wounds in their body because they couldn't afford or find the medicinal herbs to cure themselves, and finally ended up a lifelong cripple?

How many artists had risked their lives hunting vicious beasts in the jungle in order to obtain a few dozen taels of gold? How many were hunting for those basic vicious beast materials that the disciples of these large sects would never care for?

Because of lack of heritage and legacy, how many martial artists ended up practicing subpar second-rate inferior cultivation methods?

How many martial artists, in order to reach that fabled Pulse Condensation realm had struggled for a lifetime, only to end up with nothing but despair!?

And yet, the martial artists of the Seven Profound Valleys were born with a superior advantage. They ate rare spirit vegetables and high-quality vicious beast meat that ordinary martial artists could only dream of. They had the best treasures, they had pure true essence stones, they could study the core inheritances that came from a large sect, they had the top cultivation methods, they had medicinal herbs aiding and tempering their bodies since birth as well as all sorts of miracle medicines at their disposal.

Even if they were stupid like pigs, and spent each day lazing around like gluttons and doing nothing at all, by the virtue of their birth they could easily reach at least the Pulse Condensation period!

The Seven Profound Valleys' direct disciples were the pinnacle existence of these characters, and also their representatives.

This battle against Fang Qi represented not just Lin Ming, but all of the hopes and dreams of the martial artists from the 36 countries who felt inferiority in their bones. Lin Ming was their weapon to declare war on the direct disciples!

The reason these disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys were cheering like crazed madmen was because they hoped that Fang Qi would maliciously destroy Lin Ming. In their hearts, the martial artists of the 36 countries were nothing but beggars begging for alms. How could they tolerate these martial artists surpassing them? How could they tolerate these martial artists stepping on them, violating their inborn sense of superiority and dignity?

Lin Ming took a deep breath and his expression became earnest, filled with a righteous solemnity. Not too long ago, he had been one of these common martial artists. If he hadn't accidentally experienced a massive twist of luck, then he might also be risking his life to hunt dangerous vicious beasts in the jungle. He would also be practicing with all his mind and heart only to leave hidden wounds in his body. He wouldn't even have a decent cultivation method!

“This match, I will absolutely win. Not only I win, I will win with

force, so that I can take back all the wrongs that have been done to the martial artists of the 36 countries! This is our justice!”

Lin Ming clenched his fists, and the tiny units within his body began to resonate together. 5000 vibrating true essence filaments condensed on his fist, perfectly melding with the power of thunder.

At this time, the referee hadn't even announced the start of the match.

Fang Qi noticed true essence fluctuating on Lin Ming's body. He laughed and said, “Are you nervous? Whatever you are planning in advance will not change the end result. In fact, you don't even need to prepare. After the match starts, I will allow you three moves! You will have plenty of time to do whatever you want.”

Lin Ming icily said, “I do not need anything from you.”

“Haha, facing you country bumpkin martial artists from the 36 countries, if I cannot allow you three moves, then what kind of direct disciple would I be?”

Fang Qi's voice penetrated out to the farthest corners, as if there was a faint array formation helping it. It could even be clearly heard over the deafening cheers of the audience.

“Fang Qi, well done!”

“Give him three moves! Show him the disparity between him and us!”

“This countryside loser needs to go home and eat rice! He wants to reach the top 10? What an idiot! Take a good look at yourself, what sort of qualifications do you think you have?”

# Chapter 261 – What They Call Disparity

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Lin Ming was deaf to all the raucous sounds and cheers around him.

‘Allow me three moves? Good. Then I’ll kindly welcome your generous offer. I’ll see if after these three moves, you still have a chance to make one of your own!’

“Match, start!”

The referee announced the long awaited words that the audience had been hoping for. Lin Ming didn’t instantly move the second the match began. Rather, faint purple-hued true essence twined down his right fist, filling with electric flashes and sparks that crackled in the air. There was even the faint sound of a Flood Dragon’s majestic roar!

Fang Qi smiled, his face completely filled with utter confidence. He reached out his hand and drew a line, and a golden symbol appeared out of thin air. During the group stages, Fang Qi had faced off against the Refiner Faction disciple Zhou Yan, and was able to use this symbol to instantly devour the burning flames that were released.

Fang Qi had plenty of confidence that besides the other abnormal direct disciples, there was no one else capable of breaking it. There was a self-contained independent mini-dimension within that could transfer and contain attacks. Only an extreme force that exceeded its capacity could break it, otherwise, there was no attack

that could harm Fang Qi.

The reason that Fang Qi had so carelessly said he would allow Lin Ming three moves was because he relied on this small symbol array. If this small symbol array was able to block all three of Lin Ming's moves, would he still have the face to continue fighting?

Fang Qi was looking forward to that time, and he would thoroughly savor the expression on Lin Ming's face. It would be just like when he had told Jing Chanyu that he would defeat her within five breaths of time. Even though she had resisted as hard as she could, Fang Qi had still stomped down on any resistance she had. To him, this was truly the best feeling.

At this moment in the audience, Jing Chanyu was nervously wringing her hands together. She also recognized this symbol array, and feared that Lin Ming would follow in her footsteps. If this happened, it would be a serious blow towards his self-confidence and heart of martial arts.

Could Lin Ming break open Fang Qi's symbol array and end his curse in three moves? At least, he could make Fang Qi panic and wipe that look of disdain off his face!

Holding that shining symbol array in his hands, Fang Qi laughed and said, "Aren't you ready?"

"I'm waiting for you to prepare!" Suddenly Lin Ming devilishly grinned, and both of his feet tread the floor, the tiles breaking under his feet, his body becoming nothing but a series of shadows!

Lin Ming's right fist contained the vast, indomitable tyranny of the power of thunder. 5000 vibrating true essence filaments surged outwards like 5000 vicious Flood Dragons! The air around his brutal fist began to howl and cry as wind itself was torn apart!

Ka ka ka ka ka ka!

The ground began to shake as swirls of air lifted the shattered debris. Furious waves of true essence plowed a deep groove into the stage floor.

A punch shot out.

A fist to overwhelm the heavens and earth!!!

Facing such an unstoppable momentum, even Fang Qi felt inexplicably weak at heart. But he knew that for better or worse, he was still a direct disciple. This spatial transference array was one of the core techniques of the Array Faction – how could it not block Lin Ming!?

Thinking this, Fang Qi regained his confidence. He flung the golden circle symbol out. In the end, he wasn't too sure, he didn't dare intercept Lin Ming's fist at a close distance.

“Hah!”

Lin Ming loudly shouted and his right fist savagely smashed into the golden symbol array, vibrating true essence erupted!

Kacha!

With an explosive sound, a visible fist energy popped open the golden symbol array just like a foot smashing down on an egg. It was shattered into bits!

Yet the force of Lin Ming's fist hadn't even been reduced, it pounded out towards Fang Qi as before!

Fang Qi completely failed!

How was this possible!?

In a panic, Fang Qi quickly pulled out an array disc from his spatial ring. As this array disc appeared, a brilliant blue light shined outwards.

“Nine Circles of Blue Light Array!”

A solid blue curtain of light fell down in front of Fang Qi, confronting the energy of Lin Ming's fist.

Bang!



5000 vibrating true essence filaments brutally struck against that blue curtain, sinking into each and every inch of its structure. The blue curtain of light flashed for a moment, and then shattered apart.

Although the force of Lin Ming's fist had been greatly reduced, even after shattering the blue light curtain, it still pushed forwards!

Fang Qi was shocked, he bit down on his tongue and forced out some blood essence, spitting it onto the array disc. In that instant, another blue curtain of light fell down, except this one had a faint tint of blood red!

Ka!

Lin Ming's fist energy had been reduced by nearly half. As it smashed down on that blue red-tinged light curtain, there was a loud explosion as half the light curtain broke in half, just barely able to maintain itself.

After creating the light curtains, Fang Qi's face was wan, his blood tumbling within his body. Because he had to forcibly conjure up some blood essence, he had almost vomited blood. Luckily, he had forcefully swallowed it back down at the last moment. After swallowing back this blood, he was feeling even more sick, he looked completely horrible.

Lin Ming's eyebrow arched up, "You managed to block it? A direct disciple truly has considerable ability, then... there are two

more moves!”

Listening to Lin Ming’s words, Fang Qi’s face was ugly like someone had slapped his mom in front of him. He had actually cheaply promised to allow three moves!

Who wanted to take moves from such a freak! Just a fist had driven him into using the Nine Circles of Blue Light Array – he had even used two! Because there wasn’t enough time to properly draw the second one, he had been forced to use his blood essence!

A penalty of three moves. If this was a private battle, then he could possibly renege on this promise. But now, all of the disciples of the entire Seven Profound Valleys were watching. As a direct disciple, there was no way that he could do this!

Against these three moves, he had to go all out and block them. Otherwise he wouldn’t have the face to stay in the Seven Profound Valleys any longer.

‘It doesn’t matter. That should have been his strongest strike just now. Since he was forced to use his trump card, his consumption of energy shouldn’t have been small. It’s most likely that his next strike will be much weaker. Not only that, but because I had to hastily rush out the defensive barrier, I had a shameful performance. If I’m able to prepare in advance, my situation will be much better. If worst comes to pass, then I’ll just have to use my hidden card...’

Fang Qi consoled himself like this, and his heart gained a bit of

courage.

The entire martial field stadium had turned surprisingly quiet. Those loud and brash disciples that had used array formations to amplify their voices to crazily support Fang Qi did not even utter a sound now. They had thought that Fang Qi would be able to easily block the punch, they didn't expect the end result to be like this.

Although Fang Qi had held back the tumbling blood in his chest and hadn't lost face by vomiting blood, the audience was not comprised of idiots. They naturally saw that Fang Qi had eaten a small loss.

"Damn. Damn it all! Why aren't we cheering? We have to support our Senior-apprentice Brother! Cheers!"

"Yah! This time we have to cheer more. That Lin Ming must have used some secret skill in order to have so much power behind his punch. There is no way he can keep doing that! Senior-apprentice Brother Fang will still win even if he allows three moves!"

"Yes! That's the way! How could Senior-apprentice Brother Fang possibly lose?"

These disciples of the Array Faction roused their strength, and were preparing to cheer out again, when suddenly their voices caught in their throats. Several of the disciples had already shouted, and their strangled cries as they stopped midway were just like a chicken whose neck was being twisted; it was an extremely unbecoming and strange sound.

The reason for this was that on the martial stage, they saw that Lin Ming had gently swiped his spatial ring, and with a flash of white light, a long shining silver spear appeared in his hand!

The Heavy Profound Soft Spear had come out!

“Weapon? He also uses a weapon?”

“Isn’t Lin Ming a fist-using martial artist?”

“Why would he have a weapon!?”

The Array Faction disciples were stupefied. There weren’t many martial artists in the Sky Spill Continent that didn’t use weapons. However it wasn’t too rare. For instance, Grace Venerate Nation’s Jingchan Duo, Jing Chanyu and Jing Chanshi, only used their palms and finger shadows.

They had naturally assumed that Lin Ming was also one of these fist fighting martial artists. Although the attack range was short, fists excelled in flexibility, speed, and accuracy. If used well and supported by a top-tier fist fighting martial skill, it wouldn’t be any worse than using a sword or saber.

But if a martial artist had a weapon, they had most definitely would have spent most of their time cultivating that weapon, a fist would only be secondary.

Could a secondary fist really have such power?

How was this possible!??

It wasn't!

“He's bluffing!”

A disciple of the Array Faction stubbornly refused to acknowledge this reality. However, no one seemed to believe him. All of the Array Faction disciples had extremely ugly faces. It seemed that their direct disciple Fang Qi had really... screwed himself over this time.

In the contestant waiting area, Ouyang Zifeng stared at the long silver spear in Lin Ming's hand. The corners of his mouth and eyes began to violently twitch. “When I fought him, I still wasn't able to force him to use his weapon?”

Thinking back to when he had taunted Lin Ming about whether he'd be forced to use his sword, he could only ruefully smile.

Because Lin Ming had been regarded as a martial artist of the 36 countries, everyone had looked down on him.

On the martial stage, Fang Qi's face was already red as a rose. He refused to think of why a martial artist from the 36 countries could be such a monstrous freak. Without a care for his status and pride, he continuously placed five Nine Circles of Blue Light Arrays

around himself.

Because he had rushed out a Nine Circles of Blue Light Array a moment ago, he had been forced to consume some blood essence. This time, he would not repeat such a humiliating mistake again. He had prepared these Nine Circles of Blue Light Arrays ahead of time.

The Array Faction had always taken their secondary skills as the most important, thus, the strength of their faction's disciples was often inferior to the other factions' disciples. But in terms of defense, they actually surpassed the others.

The defensive strength of an array formation naturally surpassed that of a treasure armor.

Looking at the arrays of blue light shields in front of him, Fang Qi was a bit emboldened.

‘You are powerful, but can your spear break through my five array formations?’

But after thinking for a bit, Fang Qi thought it was better to be safe than sorry. He took out a small array flag from his spatial ring and began to infuse true essence into it in advance, so that he could instantly use it later if he needed to. This small array flag was Fang Qi's ultimate technique. Although the defensive power of this array formation was strong, there was still a weakness, and that was that it took time to activate. One needed to prepare in advance.

After placing down a series of array formations, Fang Qi had consumed a great deal of energy. But, he also had a special symbol array that was capable of supplementing his true essence. In a battle of attrition, Fang Qi believed that he had a superior advantage.

At this moment, Lin Ming used his spear!

Foundation Spear Technique, first move – Flood Dragon Goes to Sea!!!!

“Roarrrr!!!”

The clarion and staggering roar of a Flood Dragon impacted directly towards the sky. Behind Lin Ming, a magnificent Purple Flood Dragon shadow began to condense. After Lin Ming had absorbed the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, his Flood Dragon Goes to Sea had reached a completely different level. As soon this spear thrust out, it contained the majesty of a boundless dragon!

Coupled with the power of thunder and 5000 vibrating true essence filaments, it truly was capable of sweeping away all! The thick twining purple electric snakes were galvanized by Lin Ming. This spear of Lin Ming contained the great potential of rivers and mountains, it savagely pierced through space!

Peng peng peng!

In the face of the unstoppable onslaught of the spear, three layers of the Nine Circles of Blue Light Array were instantly shredded apart like paper!

Fang Qi's complexion completely changed, he hastily waved the array flag in his hands.

Peng!

A fourth Nine Circles of Blue Light Array shattered into shards; the Heavy Profound Soft Spear marched forwards!

Ka!

The long spear fiercely impacted against the fifth Nine Circles of Blue Light Array. Fang Qi's array flag let out a burst of golden light, and a massive number of golden runes rushed out from the array flag, all printing onto the last Nine Circles of Blue Light Array!

How was this possible!?

Fang Qi watched helplessly as the last Nine Circles of Blue Light Array that was reinforced by the golden array flag still cracked! This small crack was like the face of smiling devil, growing bit by bit!





# Chapter 262 – Three Moves To Defeat The Opponent

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“Impossible! It’s impossible! There’s no way he can destroy my Golden Light Array Flag!”

Fang Qi grit his teeth and pushed the true essence within his body to the limit. The intense energy caused his hair ribbon to come undone, his hair flailing in the wind, his face distorted like a monster.

And yet, that small crack still continued to expand! The golden light symbols that stuck to the blue curtain of light began to explode one after another.

Peng!

Finally, all the golden runes came crashing down. The fifth curtain of blue light lost the support of the golden runes and was pushed to the breaking point; under the impact of the Heavy Profound Soft Spear, it was smashed apart!

“Ahhh!”

Fang Qi shouted, and used the array flag he was waving to pound down on the Heavy Profound Soft Spear!

The array flag collided with the spear and a visible shockwave of

true essence surged out. Fang Qi felt as if he had struck an immutable mountain; an unstoppable force followed through, sending him flying backwards.

The array flag was a top-quality treasure, but the spear was a weapon inherently crafted from rushing towards its enemies. When both fought each other, the result could be imagined!

The only consolation that Fang Qi had was that the forward force of the Heavy Profound Soft Spear had come to a halt, he had barely managed to block the attack.

The true essence aftermath had sent Fang Qi flying backwards. After he landed, he was even forced back several steps to steady his body. But at this time, he didn't have the luxury of not losing face; it was already enough that he was able to receive this move.

Looking at the array flag in his hands, a third of the golden runes had broken to pieces!

Fang Qi felt a bitter heartache. This array flag was called the Golden Light Array Flag, and was a high-grade human-step magic treasure weapon. Not only that, but it was at the top of its kind. Its greatest function was to store these golden runes.

He had drawn these golden runes with painstaking care before the match, they were able to greatly increase the power of array formations. This was also meant to be the final card in his hand. He had originally prepared to use it against those abnormal direct disciples like Ouyang Ming or Jiang Baoyun. Of course, Fang Qi

didn't believe that he could win against monsters like them, but he didn't want to lose too badly. After all, all of them were direct disciples. If the disparity between them was too great, he wouldn't have lost all his face.

But now in order to fight Lin Ming, he had used up a third of the golden runes. This caused Fang Qi to feel a hopeless grief that was beyond crying.

If Fang Qi was feeling tearless bereavement, then the following few words by Lin Ming made him nauseous to the point of vomiting.

Lin Ming said, "There is still the final move!"

F\*ck!

Fang Qi really wanted to slap himself on the cheeks. His damn mouth was just too cheap, he had actually said that he would allow him three moves!

And now, Fang Qi couldn't back down. If he wasn't able to take these three moves and instead admit defeat, he would lose any face he had left.

But if he didn't admit defeat and the golden runes of the Golden Light Array Flag were lost in vain, then he would lose anyway!

How could there have been such a monster in the 36 countries!

Was this fellow really human!?

At the contestant waiting area, Jiang Lanjian was staring at Lin Ming with shining wide eyes. Ever since Lin Ming had taken out his Heavy Profound Soft Spear, he had felt threatened!

If Lin Ming was only able to use soul attacks, Jiang Lanjian would never have placed Lin Ming in his eyes. His sword force was able to cut everything to nonexistence. This included the demons of the heart, karmic sins, obsessions, and of course, this also included soul attacks.

It could be said that to a true swordsman, a soul attack was nothing at all.

But now, Lin Ming had actually taken out a spear.

Although he had only used his spear once, that spear contained a peerless momentum that startled even Jiang Lanjian!

Regardless of whether it was a spear or a sword, they all had their own soul. A martial artist would normally only be able to use the physical body of the weapon. But a genuine, true master would be able to fuse the soul of their weapon into their attacks!

When Lin Ming had struck out a moment ago, his spear had contained the potential of the mountains and rivers, and even the prestige and magnificence of a dragon. The power of the spear had broken the five Nine Circles of Blue Light Arrays, and had forced

Fang Qi into a critical state.

Especially the prestige of the dragon that was contained within that spear, it had already condensed to the point of manifesting the cry of a dragon! This was enough to make Jiang Lanjian feel ashamed of his own shortcomings.

As they said, sword like jade, saber like tiger, spear like dragon. Lin Ming was so young, and yet he had already achieved the realm of spear like dragon! This could be said to be a talent that defied the will of the heavens!

Jiang Lanjian had once thought he had reached a lofty peak of sword attainments. But now, compared to Lin Ming, he was far inferior.

Jiang Baoyun noticed Jiang Lanjian's strange expression. He smiled and said, "Lanjian, your spirit seems down, this isn't like you."

Jiang Lanjian shook his head, "I was just startled by Lin Ming. Although he's strong, it's not enough to defeat my spirit."

"Haha, that's right, we swordsmen must never let our spirits succumb to pressure." Jiang Baoyun kindly spoke as he patted Jiang Lanjian on the shoulder. Suddenly he thought of something and asked, "Lanjian, do you know how old Lin Ming is?"

"Maybe 17 or 18." Jiang Lanjian speculated. He should be around

17 or 18, it wasn't possible for him to be younger.

“Ha! You guessed wrong. Lin Ming is only 16 years old now, not only that, but he just hit 16 a few days ago!”

“What!?”

The usually staid Jiang Lanjian lost all of his calm and stood up straight.” Just turned 16!? Are you sure?”

“I was able to confirm with a Sword Faction elder. They've already begun to move in secret yesterday, they wish to pull Lin Ming into the Sword Faction! Yet, that was only yesterday. Now with today's performance, I don't think even the Sovereign will be able to sit still.” Jiang Baoyun was the direct disciple, so he naturally understood matters of the faction.

Jiang Lanjian was startled – this was no trivial matter. Leaving aside Lin Ming's peak Bone Forging cultivation, which was something he could accept if Lin Ming had a sixth-grade talent.

What he thought most inconceivable was that Lin Ming was accomplished in comprehension of soul attacks, but also deeply skilled in spear powers.

None of this was able to be learnt in a short period of time, yet, he was a boy that had just turned 16 years old. He had practiced martial arts for a mere four years, thoroughly practiced a cultivation method, thoroughly understood soul attacks, and was a

spear master; did he have an avatar technique or something?

And what was most terrifying was that Lin Ming had a thunder origin energy fusion compatibility of at least the sixth grade. This really made one disbelieve that a talent like this could exist in the world.

Jiang Baoyun patted Jiang Lanjian's back, "Well, don't give up!"

On the martial stage, Fang Qi had placed down five more Nine Circles of Blue Light arrays. It wasn't that he didn't want to set down more, it was just that five array formations was the limit that he could control. Not only that, but his true essence was limited, and he had to leave enough true essence to control the Golden Light Array Flag.

Fang Qi had mocked Lin Ming and said he would allow him three moves; this was to let Lin Ming gather his strength. But now the tables had turned and it was Lin Ming who was giving Fang Qi time to lay down his defense.

'I still have two-thirds of my golden runes left. If I use them up all at once, I'll be able to block his last strike. As long as I can block it I'll just have to admit defeat afterwards. Even though I'll lose, I'll still be able to keep the last bit of my face.'

Fang Qi already decided to block Lin Ming's attack at all costs, regardless of what he had to use. The Golden Light Array Flag had already been partially used up anyway, and there was no point in just having a few golden runes left over. It was better to just use



them all up at once.

In Fang Qi's opinion, if one third of the golden runes were able to block Lin Ming's second move, two thirds of the golden runes were definitely able to block Lin Ming's third move.

Lin Ming grasped his Heavy Profound Soft Spear horizontally, his forearm touching the base; this was the stance of Iron Bridge Blocks the River.

With this strike, he would not stay his hand.

Zi zi zi zi!

Arcs of lightning as thick as an arm wrapped around the Heavy Profound Soft Spear. Lin Ming's eyes sparked with a purple light, this was the color of the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder.

In those two previous attacks, Lin Ming had accumulated all of his momentum. Now, Lin Ming was just like a spear that was ready to strike out at any point, all of the air around him began to hum as energy rolled off his body.

Puff puff puff!

Fang Qi heard the first layer of Nine Circles of Blue Light Array tremble. This was because of the dangerous aura that Lin Ming was emitting; it was enough to pierce the blue curtain of light and create sound.

Fang Qi's face drained of all blood, this was just momentum that Lin Ming was releasing, and yet it already had this power! Just how terrifying would a frontal attack be!?

He used another third of the golden runes ahead of time and plastered them onto the last layer of Nine Circles of Blue Light. Fang Qi then let out a calm breath. "I don't believe your spear will be able to shatter the last two-thirds of my Golden Light Array Flag's golden runes!"

Once Lin Ming's momentum had reached the pinnacle, in that moment his pupils widened.

Golden Roc Shattering the Void erupted!

The Heavy Profound Soft Spear shot forth like a speeding meteor twisted with lightning. Spear force filled the void, even the air itself ignited.

Lin Ming's soul force touched deep within him, the Heretical God Seed within his heart began to let out piercing cries of excitement!

Heretical God Force – open!

Bang!

After the highly compressed true essence detonated from the

Heretical God Seed, a Flood Dragon's shadow once again manifested behind Lin Ming, but this time, it was even more lifelike than the last. Even the purple scales of the dragon were clearly visible! A resonant dragon impacted the sky, washing away all the clouds!

Divine Spear like Dragon!

Puff!

The first Nine Circles of Blue Light Array shattered before the spear point even touched it. It was broken apart by the exceedingly powerful momentum released from the spear!

The second Nine Circles of Blue Light Array had just traced the tip of the spear when it was immediately destroyed. Compared to the first layer, it was even more thoroughly ruined. The spear contained vibrating true essence and the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. To this spear, this defensive array formation was no different from paper!

Puff puff!

The Nine Circles of Blue Light Array began to explode one after another. Fang Qi had no recourse, he immediately pasted all of the golden runes onto the last Nine Circles of Blue Light Array. The entire array formation had turned completely into a bright gold!

Bang!

The Heavy Profound Soft Spear pierced forwards with no flashiness. The intense collision of true essence created a massive true essence shockwave that heaved away all the crushed tiles on the martial stage, sending them scattering in all directions. Even the protective array formation that surrounded the martial stage began to tremble.

The Heretical God Force had been opened. Vibrating true essence had fused with mystic strength of the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. This strike was almost Lin Ming's strongest blow!

Ka ka ka!

The final layer of Nine Circles of Blue Light was only able to resist for a few breaths of time. Suddenly, countless cracks began to appear on the golden curtain of light, spreading out just like a spider web!

“How... how is this possible!?!?!?”

This was two-thirds of his golden runes!

Fang Qi had no chance to think anymore. The unstoppable spear light had already cracked open the last Nine Circles of Blue Light Array, heavily striking Fang Qi's chest!

Bang!

As the golden rune burst apart, the fifth and final Nine Circles of Blue Light Array loudly shattered. Fang Qi's body was just like a sack that had been tossed in the air, spitting out blood as he flew backwards.

Three moves to defeat his opponent!

Fang Qi struck the protective circle of the martial stage, bounced to the ground, and fell unconscious.

The entire audience was completely silent.

Jing Chanyu's two small hands were tightly gripped together, her large eyes just like javelins as she stared at Lin Ming, her vision filled with a complex emotion.

She had asked Lin Ming to absolutely win, so that he could obtain justice for all of them. She had hoped he would try his hardest, but in her heart she wasn't sure if Lin Ming had the power to succeed.

But now, he had won. And not only that, he won with an overwhelming victory!

# Chapter 263 – Genius Of The Spear Path

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“Lin Ming, victory!”

As the referee declared the result, the audience was completely blown away by this unbelievable conclusion. Fang Qi said he would allow Lin Ming three moves, and in the end, he was defeated in three moves...

Especially the disciples of the Array Faction, they looked like overripe eggplants that had been trampled on. Their complexions were simply beyond ugly. They had been counting on Fang Qi to maliciously stomp on Lin Ming, and let these toads known as the country hick martial artists that they would never be able to eat swan meat. They wanted Fang Qi to show them just what true disparity was. They simply never imagined this result, they could hardly accept it.

Fang Qi had been so completely defeated. If it were them, they would no doubt be in an even worse position!

As Lin Ming arrived at the contestant waiting area, he saw a yellow-clothed girl waiting there for him. This girl was Jing Chanyu.

“Thank you.” Jing Chanyu said in a hushed tone.

“Fang Qi is someone that I would have to defeat sooner or later. You don’t have to thank me.”

“Mm, I know...” Jing Chanyu was silent for a moment, not knowing a topic of conversation to bring up. When Lin Ming had unleashed the Flood Dragon shade behind him, and pierced through Fang Qi’s defensive barriers with a single spear thrust, it had left a deep impression on her.

He was simply like a handsome, peerless god of war, shattering all barriers. Unstoppable!

At this moment, Jiang Lanjian walked over. He and Lin Ming barely knew each other.

“Lin Ming!”

“Senior-apprentice Brother Jiang.” Lin Ming cupped his fists together and bowed. Lin Ming had a good impression of Jiang Lanjian. Jiang Lanjian was a swordsman who pursued the path of the blade with all of his heart and soul. With such a person, there was no need to be reserved or guarded.

In many cases, one could determine the basic character of someone from the cultivation method that they practiced. The Seven Profound Valleys contained both good and evil, but no kind and righteous person would cultivate the dark and wicked legacies of the Acacia Faction. But the disciples of the Sword Faction and Zither Faction were mostly conscientious and virtuous people, they could be considered good people. At least, they weren’t the type that would stab you behind the back. Even if they thirsted for your blood, they would be honest. Otherwise, if their heart was not

right, then their Sword Heart or Zither Heart would never reach the stage of Perfection.

“Lin Ming, you just turned 16 years old?” Although he had just heard this news from Jiang Baoyun’s own mouth, Jiang Lanjian had to personally confirm it. This new information had simply been too shocking.

Hearing this question and seeing Lin Ming not answer, Jing Chanyu was suddenly startled. He had just reached 16 years of age!? She unconsciously covered her small mouth with her tender hands, her large eyes blinking as she stared disbelievingly at Lin Ming.

Lin Ming didn’t hesitate, he directly nodded to acknowledge the claim. After all, this was something that he couldn’t conceal. As long as the Seven Profound Valleys wanted to check up on him, they could investigate all the generations of his family with ease.

Although his age was a bit too suspicious, Lin Ming didn’t worry. The more outstanding one’s talent was, the more valuable they would be to the Seven Profound Valleys, and the more resources they could earn.

Looking at a broader view, even if he exposed too many of his powers and some people began to have dark intentions towards him, he could still stand behind Divine Phoenix Island. If he did, these people who harbored evil intentions could do nothing at all.

Lin Ming believed that Mu Qianyu might not necessarily care



about him, but he believed that she would help him if he was in a time of dire trouble.

Seeing Lin Ming nod in affirmation, Jing Chanyu gasped.

She was already considered young within all the martial artists that entered the Total Faction Martial Meeting. But she was still two months from reaching 18 years of age. She thought that Lin Ming was similar to her, at most a few months or half a year younger, but she never thought that he would actually only be 16 years old!

A 16 year old boy had participated in the Total Faction Martial Meeting, and also defeated the direct disciple Fang Qi in three moves.

What sort of terrifying result was that?

Even if it were a direct disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys like Jiang Baoyun or Ouyang Ming, they still wouldn't have such strength at 16 years of age!

Jing Chanyu thought the more she knew of Lin Ming, the less she understood him. Lin Ming was like a massive iceberg, one could only see the tip from the sky. You would only see that insignificant portion of him, without realizing the truly terrifying ability that lay beneath.

Jiang Lanjian took a deep breath, then earnestly and seriously

looked at Lin Ming. He recalled the time when he had judged Lin Ming in Desert Flower Hall, saying that if he and Lin Ming were the same level, then there was no way that Lin Ming could be his match... he had never imagined that with just a peak Bone Forging cultivation, Lin Ming was already strong enough to threaten him!

But most importantly, Lin Ming was just too young. Even Jiang Lanjian who had reached Large Success of the Sword Heart began to feel helpless. How many years had Lin Ming practiced the spear? He hadn't even practicing the spear for the entire time, and yet his spearmanship had already surpassed his own swordsmanship.

“Lin Ming, I’m looking forward to our match!” Jiang Lanjian vigorously exclaimed.

Lin Ming smiled, “We’ll fight soon enough.”

Jiang Lanjian turned around and left, leaving behind a slack-jawed Jing Chanyu.

Jing Chanyu didn't know what to say at this time. She clearly knew that in the future, Lin Ming would at least become a direct disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys. If the trend of his growth continued, he would easily reach the Xiantian stage, and he might even have an extremely high chance to aim for the Revolving Core realm!

It had to be known that there was only a single Revolving Core master in the entire Seven Profound Valleys. Not only that, but this master was only at the early Revolving Core realm.

If Lin Ming was able to reach the Revolving Core realm, then he most likely wouldn't be some ordinary Revolving Core master. He was likely to be the most powerful being within the entire Seven Profound territory, he might even become the Elder Ancestor of the Seven Profound Valleys!

As Jing Chanyu thought this, her heartbeat began to rise. Was she actually standing next to someone who would control the fate of the entire Seven Profound territory in the future?

Although Jing Chanyu knew she would have endless benefits and advantages if she befriended someone like Lin Ming, she had never done this type of thing before and approached someone unfamiliar on her own initiative. She didn't know how she should proceed from this point.

In fact, putting national interests aside, Jing Chanyu quite wanted to know Lin Ming on a more personal, intimate level. But how should she even begin?

At this moment, Qin Xingxuan and Qin Ziya walked over to Lin Ming.

When Lin Ming had heroically defeated Fang Qi on the martial stage, Qin Xingxuan had felt a precocious jolt within her young heart. Especially when Lin Ming had struck out that last spear and continuously shattered all five Nine Revolutions of Blue Light Arrays, sending Fang Qi soaring backwards and spitting blood. At this moment, just remembering that scene, Qin Xingxuan felt

goosebumps rise on her arms and her mind surge with emotion.

“Lin Ming, did you consume too much energy?” Qin Ziya asked as he took out a small jade bottle. “This is an Essence Fusing Pill, it’s able to help restore your strength and improve your condition.”

Qin Ziya feared that Lin Ming’s second round would be affected, so he didn’t hesitate in taking out an Essence Fusing pill that cost several true essence stones. This was a restorative pill and therefore didn’t contain pill toxins, one could eat them as they liked.

Lin Ming nodded, he really did need to supplement his own energy reserves. The Heretical God Force had already been used up, and he needed time to compress true essence again. Although the current restoration rate of the Heretical God Force was very quick, he would also need to hurry as fast as he could if he wanted to be able to fully utilize the Heretical God Force during the next round.

Lin Ming immediately took the pills, sat down cross-legged on a cushion, and entered the ethereal martial state to recover.

Suddenly, there was only Qin Ziya, Qin Xingxuan, and Jing Chanyu left.

Qin Xingxuan revealed a well-mannered smile towards Jing Chanyu, politely saying, “Miss Jing, this is our first time meeting. My name is Qin Xingxuan, I am Lin Ming’s friend.”

Jing Chanyu forced a courtesy smile in return, somewhat embarrassed. She saw that Qin Xingxuan seemed to be around 15 or 16 years old, and was most likely Lin Ming's girlfriend. Jing Chanyu didn't want Qin Xingxuan to misunderstand; she only wanted to get to know Lin Ming, there was no other motive.

"I see, so it's Miss Qin. It's very nice to meet you." Jing Chanyu bowed. Although she was someone who focused on cultivation, Jing Chanyu was a young girl in the end, and also had the thoughts of a young girl. Seeing Qin Xingxuan, she unconsciously compared herself to her.

Jing Chanyu thought that her looks weren't any less than Qin Xingxuan's. Both of them had different good points in their temperament. Her talent wasn't inferior to Qin Xingxuan, or at least, there was no clear winner between them, but... Qin Xingxuan was much younger than her. This was something that she couldn't change...

Jing Chanyu sighed, somewhat defeated. She said, "Chanyu bids farewell."

"Mm. Miss Jing, please take care." Qin Xingxuan bowed back and watched Jing Chanyu leave.

Qin Ziya smiled as he watched this interaction, shaking his head. "Xingxuan, let's go. This is the contestant waiting area, it's not appropriate for us to stay here too long."

"Mm, okay." Qin Xingxuan nodded.

As she was leaving, she couldn't help but glance back at Lin Ming one more time. At this moment, Lin Ming had already completely entered into the ethereal martial intent state, and wasn't aware of anything happening around him. During this state, Lin Ming's consciousness was in meditation. Unless there was imminent danger, he wouldn't feel anything at all.

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In the Grand Hall of the Seven Profound Valleys, Mu Qinghong smiled as she watched Lin Ming meditate in the contestant waiting area. This was the ethereal martial intent that Qianyu had informed her about. If she hadn't been told ahead of time, then she really wouldn't have been able to detect anything out of place.

"He's used the power of thunder, and now he's even used his spear. This little boy still has the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder in his hand, I simply have no idea what could force him to use it.

"Qianyu's judgement is too good. Not to mention Lin Ming's high-grade thunder origin energy fusion compatibility or the skill at which he can use his soul force, just the momentum of his spear is far beyond any martial artist of the same level. His spear force is like a mountain, his spear might is like a dragon; it's just unbelievable that someone so young could reach this point. This is simply an overwhelmingly monstrous perception! That Jiang Baoyun also isn't too bad, but the results of his swordsmanship just cannot surpass Lin Ming. Jiang Baoyun is someone who cultivates the sword path with all his heart, but he's also older than Lin Ming

by several years. In this aspect, the disparity between them is too great.”

Everyone, including Mu Qianyu, thought that Lin Ming was a once in a millennia rare and gifted spear genius and soul force genius, his perception was just ridiculously high to the point of being preposterous.

What they didn't know was that Lin Ming's soul force attacks all relied on his Samsara martial intent.

As for his spear force like mountain, that was because of his extreme Yang and extreme light 'Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians', which also contained the power of the rivers and mountains.

As for his spear might like dragon, that was even simpler. Not only did Lin Ming absorb the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, but his body also contained the blood of a True Dragon. If he could not achieve spear might like dragon, then there might not be anyone else in this world who could.

Mu Qinghong shot a glance at Shi Zongtian by her side. She saw that Shi Zongtian seemed calm, but his eyes shined with light. It was unknown what he was thinking.

Mu Qinghong smirked, she was more or less able to deduce Shi Zongtian's thoughts. His Seven Profound Valleys had suddenly produced a monstrous talent of the highest level, and yet this talent was suddenly being eyed by her Divine Phoenix Island.

Shi Zongtian was swayed by his own feelings and desires for his sect, and the advantages and disadvantages. He was simply unable to calm down. He even feared that his own prior promises were useless.

Mu Qinghong expected that Shi Zongtian would quickly circulate this news to the Seven Profound Valleys' Elder Ancestor. A genius of this level was already enough to be brought to the Elder Ancestor's attention.

Of course, Mu Qinghong did not care about this old fossil who had half a leg in the grave. That old man may be the ultimate dominating force in the Seven Profound territory, but in Divine Phoenix Island he was only an ordinary elder, and not only that, but one that was relegated to the second-tier.



# Chapter 264 – Zhang Yanzhao’s Blood Wave Saber

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‘It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that Lin Ming’s talent is even comparable to Qianyu’s. If he was placed within Divine Phoenix Island, he would undoubtedly be a top tier talent. Such a genius like this is worth me coming here; it would even be worthwhile for an elder to personally make a visit here.’

As Mu Qinghong thought this, she was in a very good mood. Even if she didn’t achieve her other goal, just coming and personally gaining insights into Lin Ming’s talent was worth the while.

‘If the turmoil within the South Sea realm doesn’t reach here... then maybe after 100 years, or even 200 years when Lin Ming grows up, he may become a pivotal existence within the entire Southern Region.’

Thinking of the situation within the South Horizon Region, Mu Qinghong became extremely concerned. The chaos within the South Sea would directly affect the fate of Divine Phoenix Island.

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As the matches on the martial stage continued, there were no important or famous figures that appeared. Of course, that was only relatively speaking. Even the weakest of these were much stronger than someone like Bi Tinghua.

After three matches, Zhang Yanzhao went on stage. He was up against the Sword Faction disciple, Liu Yan.

Liu Yan wasn't a weakling. During the last Total Faction Martial Meeting, he was ranked 20; this result wasn't too far from Zhang Yanzhao.

Now that all of the Seven Profound Valleys' disciples knew the phenomenon known as Lin Ming, none of them dared to underestimate the martial artists from beyond the Seven Profound Valleys. Especially Zhang Yanzhao, who was placed onto the gambling house list as a potential champion candidate with a 1:35 compensation rate.

Liu Yan was also on this list, and his compensation rate was similar to Zhang Yanzhao's.

Most people assumed that this would be a close battle, however, the match didn't go as most people expected...

At first, Zhang Yanzhao and Liu Yan were evenly matched blow for blow.

However, after 20 moves had passed, Zhang Yanzhao took out a crimson four foot long treasure saber from his spatial ring. With this saber in his hand, he put forth a dreadfully vigorous martial skill that was like a wave of monstrous blood was surging forwards, overflowing with murderous intention from all around. Liu Yan had lost almost immediately afterwards, and was even heavily injured.

The audience was shocked silly, just where had Zhang Yanzhao been hiding this strength? What was that saber? It didn't look like a normal treasure. When had the 36 countries and 16 martial families become so fierce? They had actually come out with two martial artists that were most likely able to reach the top 10.

As if Lin Ming wasn't enough, a wild Zhang Yanzhao suddenly appeared!

“That blood saber is too bizarre, I can't see what grade it is. It's likely not some common high-grade human-step treasure.”

“Maybe it's an Earth-step treasure...”

“How is that possible? Why would a martial family have an Earth-step treasure? Not even many of our faction's elders have an Earth-step treasure. In any case, even if the Zhang Family had something so valuable, there was no way that they would give it to a young man in order to show off at a tournament.”

“This truly is an Earth-step treasure; it's the family heirloom of the Zhang Family.” As a few disciples were discussing, a deep voice suddenly broke in. Everyone turned to look, and quickly bowed, paying their respects.

“Greetings, Senior-apprentice Brother Liang.”

This Senior-apprentice Brother Liang had a cultivation at the

peak of Houtian realm. Not only that, but he had just reached 30 years of age, his future glories were endless. He had recently been given a Heaven Opening Pill, and had an extreme possibility of reaching the Xiantian realm. Once he reached the legendary Xiantian realm, he would be an elder, therefore these disciples had to be very respectful towards this man.

Senior-apprentice Brother Liang said, “The first Patriarch of the Zhang Family was a Revolving Core master, that blood saber was the weapon that this Patriarch used. Once it is paired with the first Patriarch’s self-invented saber skill, its power is overwhelming!”

“The first Patriarch of the Zhang Family was a Revolving Core master? I thought that was just an exaggerated rumor...”

“Revolving Core master... that’s just too much to believe. If that were true, then why would the Zhang Family be reduced to their current state?”

Many disciples felt that this was just too unbelievable. Then Senior-apprentice Brother Liang said, “Time changes many things. Three thousand years ago, the Zhang Family was a monstrous titan that ruled over several countries and took their resources; they were just a bit better than the weakest third-grade sect. However, after the first Patriarch died of old age, the Zhang Family wasn’t able to produce a new Revolving Core master to lead the family. Because their family had accumulated a massive amount of wealth and resources that many others coveted, ultimately a bloody calamity descended upon them. Their family went through a bloodbath with most being slain or conquered, and only a minor few direct descendants were able to squirrel away some of the

wealth and run away somewhere else, concealing their identities. After 1000 years passed, so did their enemies. They did not recover to their previous status, and slowly evolved into the current Zhang Family. Of course, you cannot look down on the heritage and legacies of the Zhang Family! Even our elders have to be respectful towards their Zhang Family Patriarch.”

Senior-apprentice Brother Liang sighed with a heart full of emotion. If a family lost strength that matched their wealth and resources, they could only wait for their inevitable demise.

The first reason that the current Zhang Family hadn't been completely destroyed by the Seven Profound Valleys was that they had turned in a massive amount of resources to the Seven Profound Valleys, and their family Patriarch had personally come to negotiate. The second reason was that most of the Zhang Family's heritage and legacies were related to the saber. Since there was no Saber Faction within the Seven Profound Valleys, no one decided to care about them.

The Zhang Family had remained low key for many years; no one had thought that Zhang Yanzhao would display the weapon that the Zhang Family ancestor had wielded during this Total Faction Martial Meeting. It seemed that the Zhang Family finally believed that their family had the strength to match their wealth, and were prepared to expand the influence of their family. The Zhang Family truly had been laying low for too long.

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As Senior-apprentice Brother Liang spoke, Jiang Baoyun was also

looking at Zhang Yanzhao.

Zhang Yanzhao looked a bit on the older side, it wouldn't be too strange if someone said he were 25 or 26 years old. With his saber by his side, he exuded a faint domineering aura. However, Zhang Yanzhao's breath was deep and his steps were calm, and he didn't seem to naturally emit an overwhelming momentum.

“The saber energy is restrained; this is the state of returning to one's origins. What a good realm! I had looked down on him, but it seems that the Zhang Family gave the Blood Wave Saber to Zhang Yanzhao, wanting him to astonish the world with a single brilliant feat at this Total Faction Martial Meeting. With the Blood Wave Saber being used together with the Zhang Family ancestor's self-created Blood King's Triple Murder. Even though there are so many geniuses present, there are only a few that could actually defend against such a powerful technique!”

“This Martial Meeting is getting more and more interesting! The top ten is no longer the world of the direct disciples, but rather the battleground of proud heroes!”

The seventh and eight matches were won by Huan Xiaodie and Qin Wuxin, the proud beautiful pair of this generation. Although their opponents were not weak and they had decent results in the last Martial Meeting, they were still helpless against Huan Xiaodie and Qin Wuxin, quickly defeated in several moves.

When these two proud and exquisite women fought onstage, waves of cheering voices came from the audience. But as for Lin Ming, he turned a deaf ear to all this, immersed in the ethereal

martial state so that he could quickly recover his strength.

The second round had come to an end!

Besides the unfortunate Fang Qi, all the other direct disciples hadn't met a tough opponent. They swept away all opposition.

As the third round started, Lin Ming was finally restored to his top condition, and the compression of true essence within the Heretical God Force was completed. He had been sitting in meditation for a while longer, adjusting his mental state, and finally opened his eyes. At this time, he saw Fang Qi standing in the center of the martial stage.

‘Mm? The first match is Fang Qi... he was injured last round, but he actually was able to recover so quickly. The healing medicines of the Seven Profound Valleys are truly miraculous. As long as it's not a soul wound, one can be healed in half an hour. I wonder who Fang Qi's opponent is...’

As Lin Ming was thinking this, he suddenly heard a strange and peculiar ‘Jejeje’ laughing sound. A fellow that had a long face and extremely wrinkled skin walked onstage. He was covered in bandages, looking completely like a mummy. As this weird fellow walked onstage, he carried a strange looking bag on his back. He was thinner than a stick, and wore the most outlandishly eccentric clothing. He was like a corpse that had been buried within a coffin and had finally begun to rot, but then came back to life in a pile of bandages and rags.

As Fang Qi saw this strange mummy fellow walk onstage, his face drained of all blood.

‘What absolute sh\*t luck I have, were all my last 8 generations blood cursed or something? First I meet that freak Lin Ming in the second round, and now I meet this Puppet Faction dried corpse in the third round.’

Even though his opponent was a direct disciple, he still looked like this. Fang Qi felt like he wanted to throw up.

Lin Ming was shocked. ‘This mummy fellow is probably the direct disciple of the Puppet Faction, Mugu Buyu; Fang Qi is also a direct disciple. I thought that the direct disciples wouldn’t meet until the final rounds... is it because Fang Qi lost to me, thus he lost his qualifications to be a seeded player?’

Lin Ming thought this was also natural. After all, the reason that the seven direct disciples were saved for the last matches was in order to increase the competitive nature of the tournament, not to take care of these direct disciples. If a direct disciple didn’t have the strength, they would be eliminated early.

“Match, start!”

The referee elder said the words that Fang Qi was dreading the most. He would rather face off against Jiang Baoyun than this Mugu Buyu. This fellow’s strength was too weird, Fang Qi suspected that maybe even Jiang Baoyun might not be his match.



Not only that, but in a minute this mummy fellow would pull out puppets made of corpses, tools made of human skin, and even corpse lanterns lit with corpse oil. This creepy and macabre person really made one's scalp tingle with squeamishness.

And what was worse was that Fang Qi's Golden Light Array Flag's golden runes had all been used up. He had to temporarily borrow a second-rate treasure from his faction that had less than a third of the power of the Golden Light Array Flag. He was already expecting an extremely miserable ending when facing off against this Mugu Buyu.

“Jejeje! Array Faction's baby boy, are you prepared to admit defeat?” Mugu Buyu strangely smiled. Although it was clear that he wasn't much older, he still spoke in a very old manner and hadn't even placed Fang Qi in his eyes.

Fang Qi paled. He really had been thinking of immediately admitting defeat a moment ago, but now that he heard Mugu Buyu say such outrageous things, there was no way he could admit defeat now. Otherwise, he really would become a turtle. For better or worse, he was still a direct disciple. If he went down without a fight, and also had to swallow the insults of his opponent, then he would just lose too much face.

This wasn't just his face he would be losing, but he would also lose face for the entire Array Faction. If he retreated at this point, he would never be able to hold his head up around the other Array Faction disciples again.

Fang Qi braced himself for the worst and said, “If you want to

fight, then let's fight! Shut your filthy trap!"

"Hehe, you have courage! Unfortunately, the more you talk, the more you need strength to back it up, otherwise you will only end up looking like the fool." As Mugu Buyu said this, he shook the bag on his back, and a spider-like puppet jumped out.

This puppet had the upper body of a human, but the lower body of a giant spider. The upper body was actually quite beautiful, but as soon as Fang Qi saw that it was a puppet stitched together from corpses, he began to feel nauseous.

# Chapter 265 – Saber Like Tiger, Spear Like Dragon

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“Jejeje! Baby boy, if you can deal with little spider puppet, how about I lose to you!”

Hearing Mugu Buyu’s arrogant words, Fang Qi could only bitterly clench his teeth. “You are too conceited! Although I might not be your match, if you want to take out a single second tier puppet to deal with me, then you are not placing me in your eyes at all!”

Although the Puppet Faction was mysterious, Fang Qi had a certain understanding of Mugu Buyu’s techniques. Mugu Buyu had at least three puppets, one of them a human puppet made from the body of a peak Houtian realm master that was also the fiercest of the three.

If that human puppet was brought out, then Fang Qi would admit he was no match. But now Mugu Buyu only brought out a spider puppet to deal with him, this was simply not respecting his abilities at all.

“Earth Array – Octagonal Slaughter Path!” Fang Qi threw out his array disc, and a series of golden runes flew out from it, directly surrounding the spider puppet.

“Gather!”

Fang Qi waved an array flag, and all the golden runes tightened on the spider puppet; he wanted to kill the spider puppet trapped within the array.

The flashing golden runes fell towards the spider puppet. A brilliant golden light began to shine out from the spider puppet's body, and a golden sphere appeared around the spider puppet, protecting it.

Peng peng peng peng peng!

“This... this gold defense is... Golden Bell Barrier, metal-attribute true essence!?”

Fang Qi was completely shocked. This golden shield was obviously a defensive power that was stronger than an earth-attribute true essence shield. Although it was said that metal-attribute true essence was rare, in truth metal-attribute true essence martial artists were much more common than thunder-attribute and wind-attribute martial artists.

But what most horrified Fang Qi was that the metal-attribute true essence was refined from inside the puppet's body and then sent out! Not only that, but Golden Bell Barrier was a defensive martial skill! A puppet could actually use a martial skill!

“You... you... you've reached the ‘Essence Integration’ realm? How... how is that possible!?”

Fang Qi inexplicably panicked. Even the other direct disciples in the audience, including Ouyang Ming, Huo Yanluo, and the others had a huge change in their expressions.

Ouyang Ming took a deep breath and subconsciously clenched his fists. This was the realm of Essence Integration! Mugu Buyu's cultivation was only a half-step into the Houtian realm, and he had reached Essence Integration!

Although the Puppet Faction was incomparably enigmatic, in the end they were still part of the Seven Profound Valleys. The other direct disciples had a certain understanding of the powers and abilities of Puppet Masters.

A Puppet Master could refine a vicious beast or powerhouse's corpse into a puppet. The two most important factors of a potential puppet was that they had a strong body when they were living, and their bodies were also excellent carriers of true essence. If a puppet could have both of these advantages, they would naturally be incomparably powerful.

But a puppet was still a puppet, and they had clumsy combat utility. If one could not make use of their strong body or formidable true essence capacity, then their final combat potential would be extremely limited.

However, once a Puppet Master reached the Xiantian realm, or maybe a half-step into the Xiantian realm, they could achieve the Essence Integration boundary. This so-called Essence Integration allowed a puppet to retain their original true essence attribute that they had before death, and even allowed a puppet to keep the

cultivation methods and martial skills they knew in life!

Such a puppet wouldn't be much weaker than when it was alive!

The reason that Mugu Buyu was able to have the spider puppet create the Golden Bell Barrier was that the upper half's woman body had maintained the metal-attribute true essence she had before death.

Fang Qi's face was ashen white on the stage. This Mugu Buyu was only a half-step into the Houtian realm, but he had actually comprehended Essence Integration which usually required a cultivation at least a half-step into the Xiantian realm. Mugu Buyu was absolutely the most terrifying and monstrous talent in the Puppet Faction for the last 100 years!

Perhaps even Jiang Baoyun would lose against Mugu Buyu!

How could he have such sh\*t luck, meeting two freaks in a row!

"I... I admit defeat." Fang Qi was heavily panting as he said these words. If he had to admit defeat, then he would admit defeat. Against someone that not even Jiang Baoyun might be able to defeat, there was no point in severely injuring himself just to look like a fool, rushing through stubbornness and having everyone look down on him.

"Mugu Buyu, victory!"

As the referee elder announced this, he also couldn't help but gulp several times. This Mugu Buyu was just too scary. Even though there were so many geniuses and heroes that had gathered at this Total Faction Martial Meeting, he was a monster among monsters.

He had thought that this Total Faction Martial Meeting might be the grandest and best one in the last three, but now looking at it, let alone three, it might be superior to even the last 30 Martial Meetings.

During the last Total Faction Martial Meeting, the direct disciple still here that ranked the highest was the Acacia Faction's Ouyang Ming, who had reached third place. For a 17 year old to reach third place was already extremely abnormal. At that time, the champion and second place contestant had both been over 20 years old, and had now lost the qualifications to participate.

It had been general belief that Ouyang Ming would absolutely become the champion, but then Jiang Baoyun had surpassed him, and Ouyang Ming's chances of being number one ended.

But now, looking at this Mugu Buyu mummy fellow who had popped out of nowhere and had managed to comprehend the Essence Integration boundary, Jiang Baoyun might not even be first.

Not only that, but there was Jiang Lanjian whose strength wasn't much worse than Jiang Baoyun's, and there was Qin Wuxin who had reached Large Success of her Zither Heart, and also the young talented beauty of the Mirage Faction, Huan Xiaodie.

Not only that, but there was also the patiently waiting Zhang Yanzhao and the unfathomable Lin Ming.

This was truly a battle between heroes!

Not to mention first place, or top three, even fighting for the top ten would be fraught with enormous difficulty!

“Who will be the winner?”

The heart of the referee elder was filled with anticipation. He thought for a moment and then used true essence sound transmission to send this message to the referee group.

“Elder Jiang, what is the matter?” The referee group’s elders respectfully asked.

The referee elder on the martial stage was from the Sword Faction, and he had extremely keen judgement. His cultivation was also at the middle Xiantian realm, and he had a high rank; he was respected even amongst the elders.

“There will be a slight change to the original tournament schedule, there are simply too many talents. We do not need to wait until the end. There are especially a few matches in particular that I want to look at.”



“Okay. I just happen to agree with Elder Jiang’s thoughts. The first few matches are just too boring, there are a few match results that I would really like to know!”

After Fang Qi was defeated, there were a few calm games, and then another swell of controversy rose again!

“Third round, ninth match. Lin Ming against Zhang Yanzhao!”

As the referee announced this match, the audience rose in an uproar. The Seven Profound Valleys’ disciples were more calm, because whether it was Lin Ming or Zhang Yanzhao, they didn’t really care as they had no relation to them.

But the martial artists of the 36 countries and 16 martial families began to shout wildly, yelling at the top of their lungs.

Lin Ming was the representative of the 36 countries, and Zhang Yanzhao was the only child left from the 16 martial families. With these two strong fighters colliding, this would definitely be a fierce battle between two great martial artists. It was hard to say who would win!

The disciples of the 36 countries and 16 martial families were united by a common hatred when facing the Seven Profound Valleys, but now that they had to battle each other, they naturally had to engage each other for a while!

“Hehe, your Lin Ming’s lucky win streak is about to come to an

end. It's just bad luck that he's encountered Zhang Yanzhao here."

"Don't talk shit! Aren't you afraid of the wind cutting your tongue with how much nonsense you're talking? Isn't Fang Qi fierce? Wasn't he defeated by Lin Ming in three moves? Your Zhang Yanzhao is at most on the same level as Fang Qi. Now that he's facing Lin Ming, he's just some trash that will be defeated in a second!"

"Humph, you are just a complete sucker. Fang Qi and Huo Yanluo are worst among the seven direct disciples, they are basically just side dishes. Can they even compare with Zhang Yanzhao? Do you know what the Blood King's Triple Murder is? The power of those three moves isn't something that someone like you can imagine. It's already good if Lin Ming can withstand the second saber strike!

Lin Ming and Zhang Yanzhao hadn't even fought, but the disciples off the 36 countries and 16 martial families had already begun a savage war of words, their arguments becoming extremely heated.

Jiang Baoyun was drinking some spirit tea, and he asked with a smile, "Lanjian, your eyesight is quite good. Who do you think will win?"

Jiang Lanjian looked deeply at Jiang Baoyun. Even though Jiang Baoyun had just seen that freak Mugu Buyu and his Essence Integration ability, he was still able to maintain his calm indifference. That Jiang Baoyun could maintain this attitude meant that he was either confident against Mugu Buyu, or his Sword Heart had reached an indelible state that a normal

swordsman would never be able to compare with.

“Heh, there’s no need to mention my eyesight again. I’ve already been mistaken about Lin Ming several times, and still find that I cannot understand him at all. I originally thought Lin Ming had good chances, but the Zhang Family’s Blood King’s Triple Murder is just too powerful. It was a martial skill created by a Revolving Core master. Once it’s combined with the Blood Wave Saber, the strength it can release is incomprehensible. It is said that the third saber consumes at least 40% of one’s true essence, and can shatter the earth and heavens. I wonder how Lin Ming will be able to stop that. I just cannot predict the results of this match. Who do you think will win?”

Jiang Baoyun shook his head, and only said, “Saber like tiger, spear like dragon!”

Saber like tiger, spear like dragon?

In battle between a dragon and a tiger, who was stronger? The dragon? Or the tiger?

Regardless of whether it was Lin Ming or Zhang Yanzhao, they were both martial artists that excelled in powerful attacks. If they met on the battlefield, tens of thousands would be killed. With such overwhelmingly qualified contestants, this match was truly worth watching.

The disciples of the 36 countries and 16 martial families were cheering their heads off.

As Zhang Yanzhao stepped onto the martial stage, he did not hold back anything, he immediately took out the Blood Wave Saber. Against Lin Ming, this was the only skill he could use to defeat him.

Lin Ming stood not too far away from Zhang Yanzhao, the Heavy Profound Soft Spear in his hands. This battle was contest between saber and spear. He wanted to depend on just his own spear and have a wonderful battle.

The Foundation Spear Technique against the Blood King's Triple Murder.

Although it seemed as if Lin Ming's spear had a major disadvantage, in his hands, the Foundation Spear Technique underwent a drastic evolution. It was no longer what it once was. Every spear strike and move contained the power of the mountains and rivers. Because of this, spear skills weren't as important.

The two stood 100 feet apart.

Suddenly, the aura that Zhang Yanzhao had been restraining within himself suddenly exploded outward. One could see faint waves of blood rolling off of him, his murderous intent coming from all directions. It was as if that murderous intent was enough blot out the sky, and those waves of blood were enough to drown anyone underneath.

Lin Ming was also restrained. He was standing straight on the

stage, just like a spear itself. His body concealed a roiling momentum that seemed to instantly pierce the heavens.

Zhang Yanzhao felt as if he could hear his own aura being broken through, and that aura he released like waves of blood was simply chopped apart by a keen blade. He laughed and said, “That I can meet an opponent like you during this Total Faction Martial Meeting is already enough! I will only use three saber moves. If I cannot win against you with them, I admit defeat!”

Zhang Yanzhao was not being arrogant. It was just that his Blood King’s Triple Murder only had three sabers within. After these three sabers were used, his true essence would be over 70% consumed. If he couldn’t defeat Lin Ming by then, then he would have basically lost the match.

Zhang Yanzhao had absolute confidence in the Blood King’s Triple Murder’s third and final saber.

“Good! Make your saber move!”

With this, Lin Ming took the eternal Iron Bridge Blocks the River stance. At that moment, his aura was just like a calm mountain, unyielding and immutable!

# Chapter 266 – Blood King’s Triple Murder

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Bang!

A wave of blood soared to the heavens, and even the clouds in the skies parted. The rich true essence surged in the air like ripples in water, visible to even the naked eye. This true essence dispersed, struck the stage protection barrier, and then bounced back.

To the audience, it was as if the entire martial stage had been covered with a faint red tint; it seemed as if blood was floating everywhere in the sky.

“Blood King’s First Murder – Endless Waves!!”

Zhang Yanzhao gave a loud shout, and the treasure sword in his hand turned a brilliant blood red. A rich blood energy suddenly erupted forwards, it was as if countless surges of blood waves were rushing through the air.

As Zhang Yanzhao cut out with his knife, it was like the entire world had been covered by his saber energy; he could cut anything he wanted!

As Lin Ming faced this sword energy that seemed like massive waves of blood that blotted out the sky, Lin Ming also became incomparably serious. True essence poured into the Heavy Profound Soft Spear, and Flow like Silk broke out. At the same time, countless flashes of thunder arched around Lin Ming’s body, spear prestige transformed into a dragon!

A spear thrust out with an unstoppable momentum. 5000 filaments of vibrating true essence pounded wave after bloody wave.

Peng!

Under the vibrating true essence, the waves of blood turned into a shower of blood. It seemed as if crimson lotuses were blooming in the sky. As the waves of blood were torn apart, Lin Ming's spear and Zhang Yanzhao's saber collided in midair!

A blood red light flashed, and Lin Ming's spear pierced the curtain of blood, unstoppable!

Zhang Yanzhao was shocked in his heart. This spear of Lin Ming's looked simple, but there were profound principles and esoteric truths contained within!

The majestic strength of the world, the power of the strange vibrations, and the wildly savage purple thunder; all three of these powers perfectly fused together, creating an implacable force!

At this moment, he realized Lin Ming's strength. It wasn't that Fang Qi was weak, it was only that Mugu Buyu and Lin Ming were too strong. That was the only reason that Fang Qi had been so thoroughly and completely defeated!

The long spear was like a dragon; after breaking through the mist

of blood, it pierced towards Zhang Yanzhao's chest!

At this critical moment, Zhang Yanzhao used his palm as a saber and cut down on the Heavy Profound Soft Spear.

Clang!

The intense impact caused the Heavy Profound Soft Spear to instantly bend like a crescent moon. Zhang Yanzhao grit his teeth as he retreated backwards, his right hand was already stained red with blood!

“What? A spear broke through Zhang Yanzhao's Blood King's First Murder, and he was also injured?”

“This is too weird. Didn't Lin Ming not use a martial skill during that spear strike? Can there be such strength without a martial skill? How terrifying would it be if he did use a martial skill!?”

To most of the audience, whether it was Zhang Yanzhao or Lin Ming, both of them gave them an unfathomable feeling. During the last Martial Meeting, he had reached the top 20. Now, during this Martial Meeting, he had defeated Liu Yan with just a single saber strike. Liu Yan's strength probably wasn't in the top ten, but he could still be around rank 12 or 13; he was definitely not some weak nobody.

There was no need to mention anything about Lin Ming. Against Fang Qi, he had defeated him as if he were just chopping a melon!



However, these matches were not enough to fully explain the level of these two people. Everyone knew that before now, neither of them had used their full strength to fight. This would be a truly powerful battle!

They had thought that the difference in strength between Lin Ming and Zhang Yanzhao wasn't too great, but they never thought that Zhang Yanzhao would be the first one injured, and so quickly too.

“Second Elder, Zhang Yanzhao seems to be in danger. That Lin Ming had only used a casual spear thrust without any martial skill or technique, and he was able to break through Zhang Yanzhao's Blood King's First Murder!” Since Zhang Yanzhao was competing, then naturally people from the Zhang Family would also have come. The group leader was the Second Elder of the Zhang Family.

“No martial skill? Heh, you're wrong. Lin Ming's spear skill has fused many unknown principles within – every move he makes is the same as a martial skill!” As the Second Elder gazed at the two people onstage, his pair of deep eyes shined brightly. “Don't worry, that casual spear thrust is powerful, and it wouldn't be strange if he had other cards in his hand, but that Blood King's First Murder that Yanzhao just used was the weakest saber. The second saber will be three times as strong. And the third saber will be three times stronger than the second. Breaking through the first saber doesn't mean anything at all!

On the martial stage, Zhang Yanzhao's eyes were brilliant. “Lin Ming, your strength astonishes even me! But you're wrong if you

think you'll defeat me so easily!"

As Zhang Yanzhao said this, the saber in his hand began to shine. The tiles under Zhang Yanzhao's feet began to be pulverized by waves of violent air.

"Blood King's Second Murder – Extermination of Gods and Ghosts!!!"

"Haaah–!"

The blood energy in the air seemed to incinerate, and a crimson vortex appeared on Zhang Yanzhao's saber, instantly absorbing all of the blood energy everywhere, wiping even the sky clean! Suddenly, the energy condensed onto the saber was several times stronger than before!

Lin Ming was startled. Mm? Once the blood energy from the first saber was fused into the second, the power actually increased so much!

"This is at least three times as strong!" Lin Ming frowned. It wasn't as if he couldn't block this saber – he could. The problem was if the second saber's power had already increased by so much, then what would the third saber be like?

Bang!

Burning waves of blood surged towards Lin Ming. The saber

energy was just like a massive river that had suddenly been unleashed from a dam, resulting in an unstoppable flood!

Facing a saber energy that even covered the sky, Lin Ming instantly activated Golden Roc Shattering the Void, his body like a shadow as it retreated. At the same time, the Heavy Profound Soft Spear struck out like a serpent!

Flowers in the Storm!

Puff puff puff puff puff puff!

In that moment, Lin Ming pierced out with hundreds of spear strikes. Each spear contained the power of thunder fused with vibrating true essence.

In this continuous onslaught, the massive wave of blood continued for hundreds of feet, pushing Lin Ming to the edge of the stage before finally dissipating.

The audience hadn't yet been able to respond to such a quick reversal of fortune. Just awhile ago Lin Ming had broken through Zhang Yanzhao's first saber, and had even injured him. Now, Lin Ming had been pushed back so far by Zhang Yanzhao's second saber.

There could only be one explanation, and that was that Zhang Yanzhao's Blood King's Triple Murder became increasingly powerful with each saber. Not only that, but the disparity between

each strike was gargantuan. If so, then just how strong would the third saber be? How would Lin Ming deal with it?

The disciples of the 36 countries couldn't help but feel nervous for Lin Ming, their faces dripping with anxious sweat.

“Haha, good!”

A Zhang Family elder laughed. In all of Lin Ming's matches so far, no one had been able to push him back. Now, he was actually forced back hundreds of feet by Zhang Yanzhao's saber.

Moreover, this was only the second saber of the Blood King's Triple Murder. The third saber would be three times stronger than even the second saber. The Zhang Family elder wanted to see just how Lin Ming would be able to block that.

“Yanzhao has already won half the battle. Now, even if Lin Ming has a hidden card in his hand, it still might not be enough to block the third saber!”

“Mm. If Yanzhao can defeat Lin Ming here, then that would be a great advantage to my Zhang Family's momentum. This match is just too important!” The Second Elder confidently spoke this as he stroked his beard.

The Zhang Family had been hiding their strength for the last several hundred years. Now, it was finally time to begin their revival; there was just no significance in blindly and constantly

hiding their family's resources. On the contrary, what they had to do was expand their family's influence. The more influence they had, the more powerhouses they could hire to join their family.

“There is still the last saber. Lin Ming, I want to see how you'll block this!” As Zhang Yanzhao said this, his entire body erupted with a surge of true essence. He lifted the Blood Wave Saber high above his head, and the entire saber began to blaze with a brilliant light. The true essence of his body was just like a flood that was being held back by the treasure sword in his hands.

Lin Ming could clearly feel that the true essence reserves in Zhang Yanzhao's body were rapidly depleting!

“This is truly worthy of being called an Earth-step treasure sword; it can actually store so much true essence!”

When Lin Ming used Thunderfire Annihilation, he would instantly consume 40% of his true essence, and that was because he had to suffuse his true essence into the Heretical God Seed. The Heretical God Seed was simply a bottomless pit. But if Lin Ming tried to pour his true essence into the Heavy Profound Soft Spear, it wouldn't take much true essence before the Heavy Profound Soft Spear reached its limit. Looking at it from this aspect, the disparity between a medium-grade human-step treasure and an earth-step treasure was simply like clouds and mud!

“No wonder it is said that the Blood King's Triple Murder needs the Earth-step treasure Blood Wave Saber in order to display its power, it was for this reason. A human-step treasure simply cannot contain that much true essence.

Within a breath of time, Zhang Yanzhao had already poured over 50% of his true essence into the Blood Wave Saber. In addition to the consumption of the last two sabers, Zhang Yanzhao didn't even have 30% of his total true essence remaining.

He was staking everything on this, a single saber to decide victory or defeat!

“This is my strongest ability! Blood King's Absolute Murder – Heaven and Earth Collapse!”

Zhang Yanzhao loudly bellowed, and he suddenly rose several hundreds of feet into the air; everything under his feet had become meaningless!

Lin Ming's eyes widened. The power of Zhang Yanzhao's saber was actually three times stronger than the last! It kept rising by three times every time! In comparison to the first saber, Zhang Yanzhao's third saber was nine times stronger!

Even if Lin Ming opened the Heretical God Force and increased his power by 60%, he still wouldn't be able to block this saber. If he wished to confront his opponent head-on, he either had to use the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder or Thunderfire Annihilation.

However, Lin Ming didn't want to use these two trump cards against Zhang Yanzhao.

That was because he still had another card in his hand – reverse scale blood!

With the fusion of the True Dragon Energy's azure true essence, it would continually grow, endlessly!

Not only was this kind of true essence all-conquering, able to break through any defense, it was tenacious and difficult to destroy. Although it wasn't eternal like a Flame Essence, if one wished to destroy it, they needed multiple times the true essence in order to wear it down.

This was the everlasting concept that existed forever within the True Dragon – eternal and immortal power!

As for the present Lin Ming, he could not achieve true immortality. That was because his cultivation was limited and he wasn't able to display the full might of the reverse scale blood.

Even so, this endless true essence was not so easy to destroy.

“Roar!”

With the resonant and majestic cry of a dragon, Lin Ming's aura shot into the clouds, piercing the heavens, and the reverse scale blood completely fused into his true essence.

At that moment, Mu Qinghong, who had been sitting in the Grand Hall, was shocked in her heart, her beautiful face suddenly

changing color!

This... this is...

Mu Qinghong had lived in Divine Phoenix Island for many years, and she had the bloodline of the Vermillion Bird injected within her body. As she heard that loud dragon's cry a moment ago, she felt the bloodline within her body tremble in fear!

“Could this... could this be the strange Flood Dragon bloodline that Qianyu had mentioned?”

She helplessly watched as the shade of a Flood Dragon appeared behind Li Ming once again. Compared to before, this time it was even more real. The more she looked at it, the less it seemed like a Flood Dragon. It was as if... as if... True Dragon!?!?

Long spear manifesting dragon!

It was a true blue, genuine long spear manifesting dragon! Heavens! How old was he again!?

A spear genius of this level was unprecedented from ancient times until now!

Bang!

The vibrating true essence that contained the energy of the True



Dragon intensely impacted against the Blood King's Absolute Murder! Lin Ming's true essence had transformed into a deep azure color, standing out in stark contrast to the deep dark red that stained everywhere; it was an incomparably gorgeous and dazzling sight!

It was as if space was torn apart. Intense red shockwaves violently impacted everywhere, alarmingly dire waves of blood frothing forth. But in the midst of these crazy and turbulent waves, a bright azure colored spear light pierced through, thrusting straight towards Zhang Yanzhao's chest!

Zhang Yanzhao's triumphant expression instantly froze.

Puff!

It was like his chest had been struck by a mountain. Zhang Yanzhao spat out a mouthful of blood, and he flew backwards like a broken ragdoll.

# Chapter 267 – Azure True Essence

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Bang!

Zhang Yanzhao smashed against the martial stage's protective barrier, the blood within his body tumbling endlessly. Although he had suffered a heavy injury, he was still able to use his saber to prop himself up on the ground, and not fall flat to the floor in a shameless scene.

How could this be!?

Zhang Yanzhao could not believe this. He had exhausted over 50% of his true essence in order to send out the Blood King's Absolute Murder. The terrifying storm of saber energy that was released still wasn't able to crush that azure spear light that was several times less than his own! Instead, that spear light pierced through layer upon layer of blood waves, finally striking him down!

What sort of spear light was that?

It was as if it were indestructible.

It was simply too terrifying!

As Zhang Yanzhao looked up and saw Lin Ming, he noticed that Lin Ming was standing exactly where he had been, without a single wound on his body. Zhang Yanzhao had clearly seen that in the

split second that the Blood King's Absolute Murder had reached Lin Ming, that azure spear light had managed to tear open a hole within the blood waves, parting them in half and allowing Lin Ming to dodge most of the attacks. As for the rest of the energy, it had struck Lin Ming but was unable to shatter apart the azure true essence that protected his body.

This kind of weird true essence was too terrifying! Although it didn't feel too powerful, it was completely immutable.

The entire audience was stunned silent as all of them quietly gazed at the martial stage. Zhang Yanzhao's final saber had created an extremely powerful force that had exceeded their imaginations. It had even blasted apart the array formation tiles in the center of the martial stage, leaving behind a massive crater that was over a dozen feet deep!

Heavens!

Was this really a showdown of the younger generation? Even a battle between late Houtian realm, or even peak Houtian realm masters would not be able to create such awe inspiring carnage!

At this moment, a thin drizzle of blood began to fall from the sky as if it were a spring rain.

It hit the face, wet and sticky.

After the endless waves of blood were blown apart, their

powerful energy had managed to seep through the defensive barrier of the martial stage, forming clouds of blood in the sky. This phenomenon was substantiated by Zhang Yanzhao's true essence, becoming reality. His true essence manifestation was thick as blood.

Even the group of referee elders were shocked speechless. This was because they had taken Jiang Baoyun as the strongest representative of all the direct disciples, and thus the strongest of the younger generation. His strength was capable of reaching the middle Houtian stage, so they had created a defensive barrier that was able to withstand attacks from a late Houtian realm master. This defensive barrier should be able to withstand a continuous onslaught from a late Houtian realm master without breaking.

Yet Zhang Yanzhao's true essence manifestation blood waves had actually managed to flow through the defensive barrier; this could only mean that his striking power had reached the standard late Houtian realm master!

What sort of concept was it for a half-step Houtian martial artist to have the attack power of a late Houtian realm master?

This was just too difficult to imagine!

The Blood King's Triple Murder was just too terrifying a skill!

And what was even more horrifying was Lin Ming; he had actually managed to withstand such a powerful blow and counterattack!

His spear had broken through the blood waves, splitting them in half. Not only was he completely safe, but he had overcome those layers of blood to strike Zhang Yanzhao!

That azure true essence was not too powerful, but its unwillingness to die made one's heart quicken with fear!

.....

In the Grand Hall, Shi Zongtian glanced at Mu Qinghong, hesitating for a moment. He had caught Mu Qinghong's violent reaction to what had just happened in the match.

From the start until now, no mighty wave of valorous performance of the Martial Meeting was able to startle the ever-placid Mu Qinghong. Whether it was Jiang Lanjian's swordsmanship attainments or Mugu Buyu's Essence Integration boundary, Mu Qinghong had only nodded as she watched without a reaction. To her, all of this seemed common.

But a moment ago, Mu Qinghong, who had always maintained a calm and indifferent expression, suddenly paled, and grasped the armrests of her chair, nearly standing up. This had caused Shi Zongtian a great amount of surprise. Was Mu Qinghong really someone capable of being surprised?

Normally, Shi Zongtian would be very proud that a disciple of his sect would be able to cause a Special Envoy of Divine Phoenix Island to have this expression. But now, Shin Zongtian did not feel

happy or satisfied at all. Mu Qinghong had obviously noticed something in particular, but Shi Zongtian hadn't seen it at all.

He suspected that the azure true essence was what Mu Qinghong was surprised about, but as for what secrets it held, he did not know.

He searched his own memory for information on this azure true essence. Was it a special sort of martial intent? Or... could it be... True Essence Concept?

Thinking this, Shi Zongtian's heart began to quiver. If it really was a True Essence Concept, then that was simply heaven defying. There were exceedingly few people that were able to comprehend a True Essence Concept. These people were beyond the rare among rare. This Concept that Lin Ming seemed to have understood looked like the legendary eternal True Essence Concept where true essence grew endless, refusing to die, nearly immortal.

But was this really possible? He was still in the Bone Forging stage, and yet he had comprehended a True Essence Concept. Not only that, but it was the legendary eternal true essence!

Mu Qinghong noticed Shi Zongtian observing her. Knowing that it was a breach of conduct, she smiled and asked, "Does Valley Master Shi have anything to say?"

Shi Zongtian was slightly stunned, and then he smiled and said, "Nothing, I was just laughing at how stupid and shoddy my judgement of the Seven Profound Valleys' disciples has been.

There was such an unpolished jade in my land and yet the first one to discover this was actually the vaunted Saintess. The Saintess' eyes are like an all-seeing beacon, it's no wonder that Divine Phoenix Island has been thriving this past millennia!"

Shi Zongtian's words were filled with a trace of discontent; he was obviously dissatisfied with Divine Phoenix Island reaching their hands out so far. As for that azure true essence, there was no point in him taking the initiative to ask, Mu Qinghong was just too clever to reveal anything.

"Haha, all of the uncut jades in this world will belong where they are destined for. What does Valley Master Shi think of this?"

Shi Zongtian's complexion immediately became ugly. He icily said, "Fair Maiden Qinghong's remarks are simply too biased! Only those uncut jades that are ownerless will find their way to whoever they are destined for. As for those uncut jades that already have a master, it is best to take them up and personally polish them."

"Valley Master Shi, isn't Lin Ming not even a disciple of your Seven Profound Valleys? My family's Young Mistress merely had a fateful encounter with Lin Ming, but didn't take him away. In this matter, Divine Phoenix Island has already showed extreme patience, doing everything humanly possible. Why must Valley Master Shi be so unbecomingly hostile?" Mu Qinghong said with a light 'humph'.

As Shi Zongtian heard this, he suddenly paused. It was true that he was a bit nervous and thought that Divine Phoenix Island was trying to poach someone from him. But, he also wondered, if Lin

Ming's talent was so amazing, why would Divine Phoenix Island let him go? He would be a top-tier talent even with a fourth-grade sect.

But as he thought about it some more, if Divine Phoenix Island really came to dig in his little corner of land, there was no reason to do all of this. They could have already taken him away with irresistible offers and promises.

Shi Zongtian said, "I apologize if I offended Fairy Maiden Qinghong. It's just that to a small third-grade sect like mine, a peerless genius is truly too important. With a peerless talent, it might be that several hundred years from now, my Seven Profound Valleys might possibly reach the turning point of becoming a fourth-grade sect! Because of this, I was just a bit too excited and aggressive."

Although it seemed like too much of an exaggeration to claim that the power of a single person could cause a third-grade sect to rise to a fourth-grade sect, there was still some truth in it.

If Lin Ming could reach the peak Revolving Core realm and then hire some capable individuals, this might be possible.

A peak Revolving Core master seemed as if it were an incomparably distant goal. Yet with Lin Ming's trivial peak Bone Forging cultivation, he was still able to compare to a Houtian realm master. In the future, there was a glimmer of hope that he could reach the peak Revolving Core realm!



.....

Above the martial stage, Zhang Yanzhao had already smothered the restlessness within his chest with true essence. He wiped the blood from his mouth and sullenly smiled, slowly shaking his head.

“I admit defeat.”

His three sabers had consumed over 70% of his true essence, and he even had the support of a low-grade Earth-step treasure saber! In comparison, Lin Ming hadn't even used up 10% of his true essence, and he only used a medium-grade human-step treasure spear.

In that situation, Lin Ming was even able to counterattack and wound him. This disparity between them was just too great.

Zhang Yanzhao felt as if Lin Ming was a towering mountain that pierced the heavens, it was too difficult to hope to reach him.

“Well fought.” Lin Ming cupped his fists together in respect and then put away his Heavy Profound Soft Spear.

“Lin Ming, victory!”

With the announcement of the referee, the Second Elder of the Zhang Family exhaled a heavy breath. He muttered, “This child is simply a dragon within a deep pool; Yanzhao didn't lose without

just cause!”

Although Zhang Yanzhao had lost the match, the Zhang Family had managed to show their power and influence. Zhang Yanzhao’s final saber was able to compare to a late Houtian master’s all-out attack, it was enough to shock the entire audience.

Since he lost to Lin Ming in that situation, he could only blame it on his own ability being inferior.

When Lin Ming returned to the contestant waiting area, many of the other contestants were unconsciously looking at him. Some had complex expressions, some looked jealous, some looked fearful, some looked excited, and some even looked appreciative.

During the third round of the tournament, Lin Ming had stepped into the spotlight, leaving a deep impression on the audience’s minds – not unlike the mummy Mugu Buyu who had comprehended the Essence Integration boundary.

Of course, this only meant that Lin Ming had caused a shock within the audience’s minds that was equal to Mugu Buyu, it didn’t imply that his strength was on par with Mugu Buyu.

In the opinion of the majority of the audience, the Essence Integration boundary that Mugu Buyu had reached was a realm that could only be reached by a Xiantian master. Mugu Buyu’s strength likely exceeded even Jiang Baoyun’s, and he had become the number one master of the seven direct disciples.

This point could be seen from the gambling house

Before Mugu Buyu had revealed his Essence Integration boundary, Jiang Baoyun's odds was 1:1.6. As for another popular favorite, Ouyang Ming, his odds was 1:4. At that time, Mugu Buyu's odds was also 1:4.

But after Mugu Buyu revealed his Essence Integration boundary, his odds had plummeted down to 1:1.8. As for Jiang Baoyun, his odds had risen to 1:2.5. And as for Ouyang Ming, his odds rose to 1:6.

With these odds, there weren't many people that bet on Ouyang Ming. Even the disciples of the Acacia Faction mostly bet on Mugu Buyu.

It was worth mentioning that Lin Ming had finally appeared on the list of possible champion candidates. In his first appearance, his odds were 1:12. These odds were already quite good. As for Zhang Yanzhao, his odds were 1:35.

“Xingxuan.”

In the audience, Qin Xingxuan suddenly heard Lin Ming's true essence sound transmission in her mind.

“Ah! Lin Ming, are you alright?”

The scene of Lin Ming fighting within those waves of blood kept repeating within Qin Xingxuan's mind, cause her heart to wildly

dance. One reason was that she had been extremely frightened and worried.

As for the second, that was due to the young and precocious feelings that were budding within a young girl's heart, which caused her heartbeat to accelerate.

Lin Ming's voice was playful. "Go to the gambling house and bet 300 true essence stones that I will win, I'll buy them. If you don't have enough true essence stones, you can borrow some from Martial House Master Qin. Later I'll return the true essence stones to you."

"300 true essence stones?" Qin Xingxuan gasped in surprise. Even though she came from a wealthy family, this number was just too startling; this was 300,000 gold! Listening to Lin Ming's words, he believed he had a very high chance of winning. If he really did win, then he would win 3600 true essence stones!

Heavens!

3600 true essence stones was 3.6 million gold taels! Even to the Marshal Quarters, that was an inestimably large sum of money! It had to be known that the yearly expenses of the Marshal Quarters only amounted to two or three hundred thousand gold taels.

"Mm, that's right, 300 true essence stones."

The amount of true essence stones that Lin Ming needed in order

to cultivate now was no small number. These many years the Seven Profound Valleys had sucked up who knew how many resources from the surrounding countries. This amount wasn't even enough to cover interest.

Because this gambling house was started by some disciples with an elder backing them, Lin Ming wanted to bet one or two thousand true essence stones and have them compensate several tens of thousands of true essence stones in one go.

However, the ones who managed the gambling house were only personal disciples, they couldn't necessarily repay.

“3600 true essence stones... that should be equal to several months of expenses for these personal disciples, they should be able to repay it.”

## Chapter 268 – Abyssal Flames

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“I... admit defeat...”

During the fourth round of the tournament, Lin Ming's opponent chose to directly admit defeat. This was already quite rare for anyone that managed to enter in the finals. Even if they faced one of the several direct disciples and knew perfectly well that they would never win, they still played out a symbolic battle. Many of the disciples purely came to experience the strength of the direct disciples and exchange moves with them.

As for Lin Ming, he could have been described as a complete unknown before the Total Faction Martial Meeting. Because of this, there weren't many people that were interested in exchanging blows with him and ultimately end up disgracing themselves.

Lin Ming won with ease. Afterwards, it was time for Fang Qi to step on stage. Fang Qi finally ended his streak of bad luck; he managed to face a disciple who wasn't too strong or too weak, and he ended up winning via overwhelming superiority.

Fang Qi ended the match with the fastest speed he could muster. It was as if here were trying to use this method to announce to the audience that he wasn't weak, it was just that his luck was bad and he met two abnormal fellows.

As the matches continued one at a time, they were either unequal matches or the two contestants were relatively weak, so there wasn't much anticipation in the audience.

It seemed as if the fourth round would end with no great waves occurring, but in the last game, there was actually a relatively shocking match that was announced, “Huo Yanluo against Mugu Jirong!”

Up until now, these two had experienced complete victory.

Han Yanluo was the direct disciple of the Refiner Faction, but Mugu Jirong was the second ranked disciple of the Puppet Faction.

This was a battle between a direct disciple and a second ranked disciple, and yet the audience favored Mugu Jirong!

Although Huo Yanluo was a direct disciple, the Array Faction and Refiner Faction had always been the two factions with the weakest combat potential. This was because a person had limited time and energy, and the disciples of these factions had to invest an excessive amount of time and effort into learning refining and array skills. This would inevitably affect their own strength.

In the general opinion of the audience, Huo Yanluo was on the same level as Fang Qi.

By comparison, Mugu Jirong may have been a second disciple, but he originated from the secretly formidable Puppet Faction. With only Mugu Buyu in front of him, the strength of this Mugu Jirong also had to be abnormally strong!

This match had a separate bet within the gambling house. Huo Yanluo's odds were 1:3, but Mugu Jirong's were 1:1.4.

From the very start of the match, Mugu Jirong brought out three puppets. Two of them were corpse puppets, and the last was a mechanical puppet created from materials.

As the three puppets attacked together, Han Yanluo quickly found himself surrounded and in danger.

Mugu Jirong smiled with a strange 'jejeje' sound. Although he hadn't yet reached the Essence Integration boundary, he was still more than enough to deal with some Refiner Faction disciple.

Within several moves, Huo Yanluo was forced into a dead end!

"Jeje, the Refining Faction is just so weak. You can't even beat me, but you think you can take on my Senior-apprentice Brother? Let me send on your way!"

Pah pah!

The mechanical puppet's four arms took out shining long knives. But the other two corpse puppets also began to revolve true essence throughout their bodies; they were planning to attack Huo Yanluo from three different angles!

This was a sure-kill situation!



At this critical moment, Huo Yanluo's pupils flashed with a dazzling red light, it was the color of fire!

“Abyssal Flames, explode!”

Bang!

It was as if Huo Yanluo's body detonated and massive red crimson salamanders ran out from his body, directly streaking towards the three puppets!

A nightmarish blazing heat wave broke out, and the three puppets were washed in flame. The two corpse puppets were instantly burned to charcoal, and the last mechanical puppet was left half burned in fire!

Even the stone tiles underneath Han Yanluo melted, turning into magma!

Mugu Jirong was shocked, how was this possible!?

Even from a distance of over a hundred feet away, he could still feel that scorching hot heat wave; it was no different to a massive tsunami, flowing without end. He didn't doubt that if he hadn't withdrawn his true essence to protect his body, then even his clothes would have been instantly burnt away!

What kind of fire was this?

Was this... a Flame Essence? Even a normal Flame Essence wouldn't have such amazing power; it could only be... a high-grade Flame Essence!!!

Han Yanluo, a mere peak Pulse Condensation martial artist, was actually able to absorb a high-grade Flame Essence?

At this time, the audience watching the match was stunned, there were many among them that had a great understanding of Flame Essences.

“Heavens! Abyssal Flames! A medium-grade human-step Flame Essence!”

“It's also the highest among all the medium-grade human-step Flame Essences. One needs to be at least at the peak Houtian realm in order to absorb such a flame essence!”

“How did Huo Yanluo manage to absorb this?”

As the disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys discussed this, the disciples of the Refiner Faction's eyes were particularly blood-red!

A Flame Essence was something that they longed for in their every dream. Let alone a medium-grade human-step Flame Essence, even a low-grade human-step Flame Essence was something that they could only ever hope for in vain!

“Do not envy him, envying him is useless. Huo Yanluo’s father is the Sovereign of the Refiner Faction. This medium-grade human-step Flame Essence was definitely placed within Huo Yanluo’s body by the Refiner Faction Sovereign using some sort of special technique. For instance, if he had let Huo Yanluo suppress the Flame Essence in advance by soaking in Glacial Ice Divine Spring Waters, and then resting on a Polar Jade Bed. If he had these things, he would be able to absorb the Flame Essence with only a cultivation at the early Houtian realm. Although Huo Yanluo is only at the peak Pulse Condensation period, his talent is quite amazing. He has a sixth-grade fire origin energy fusion compatibility, an early Houtian realm cultivation limit isn’t something that can stop him.”

“Glacial Ice Divine Spring? Heavens! I’ve only ever heard about something like that. It’s said that a single vial takes 50 or 60 thousand true essence stones! Yet it was only used to let Huo Yanluo absorb the Abyssal Flame several boundaries early. This is just too extravagant a cost!”

“Don’t complain, who told you not to have such a great father? Then again, Senior-apprentice Brother Huo’s talent is just too amazing. Even if we had the same resources given to us, do you think we could do anything about it? We might have already been burnt to toast by the Abyssal Flame!”

“Ah! That is a medium-grade human-step Flame Essence! I don’t even expect to be able to build up my Hollow Flame Essence to a 500 year rank in my life. In the future, I would be content just to have a low-grade human-step Flame Essence...”

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In the Grand Hall of the Seven Profound Valleys, the Sword Faction Sovereign smiled as he turned to Huo Yanluo's father Huo Xuan, and said, "Old Huo, you really invested a lot this time!"

The Sword Faction Sovereign already knew that Huo Yanluo had absorbed a Flame Essence, he just didn't know that it was the medium-grade human-step Abyssal Flame.

"Hehe, don't mention it. I already wasted over an entire year of time in order to help my useless son absorb the Abyssal Flame." Although Huo Xuan seemed to complain, his entire face was all smiles. Obviously, he was very satisfied with his son. He had done all of this in order to have his son amaze the world at this Total Faction Martial Meeting. Although it would be difficult to take first place, he should still easily manage to reach the top 5. There was even a glimmer of hope to reach the top 3.

To the Refiner Faction that was normally weaker in combat, this was already a very good result.

"I heard that Yanluo's fire true essence has reached a sixth-grade fusion?" The one was asking was a Sword Faction Great Elder.

Huo Xuan's face was red with delight and pride. He waved his hand and said, "Medium sixth-grade, far from satisfactory."

Ignoring his family background, the fact that Huo Yanluo was able to absorb a medium-grade human-step Flame Essence with his peak Pulse Condensation cultivation proved that he had a prodigious talent! If it wasn't because of his sixth-grade fusion, then no matter how many resources Huo Xuan invested in him, it would still be useless.

On the martial stage, it was unexpectedly difficult to suppress the flames that burnt the puppets. Mugu Jirong watched helplessly as his mechanical puppet was almost entirely burnt away.

It had to be known that the main body of the mechanical puppet was created from fire resistant Purple Smoke Wood. It wouldn't melt even if placed with darksteel magma, and yet it had instantly been burnt by the Abyssal Flames.

As for the puppet skeleton, it was made from high-grade human-step treasure Aged Gold. Even the heavy profound soft silver that was used to create the elastic joints melted away. The power of this medium-grade human-step Flame Essence was obvious.

Didn't this mean that most treasures of martial artists would also be melted by the Abyssal Flame if they didn't have true essence protection?

“Huo Yanluo, I will remember you!” Mugu Jirong retrieved the leftover pieces of the mechanical puppet into his puppet bag. He stared at Huo Yanluo with vulture-like eyes, “I acknowledge that I have lost this match. But next time, I will have you pay back everything you owe me, plus interest!”

Huo Yanluo's thick eyebrows furrowed together. He coldly said, "You still act in such a sad manner even though you lost. Just who do you think you are?"

"Humph!" Mugu Jirong coldly snorted and then turned around to leave the stage.

Before Huo Yanluo could say anything, he suddenly discovered that Mugu Buyu was staring at him from the side of the martial stage, his pair of beady eyes just like a venomous snake gazing at its prey.

Huo Yanluo felt as if a chilling breeze touched his body. But knowing that he had the Abyssal Flame, he was not afraid of Mugu Buyu any longer. What other tricks could he play once all of his puppets were burnt down?

Thinking this, Huo Yanluo regained his confidence and stared back at Mugu Buyu without fear.

The Puppet Faction hated showing weakness the most. Now that Huo Yanluo had ruined Mugu Jirong's three puppets and thus greatly reduced his combat strength, Mugu Buyu would certainly be looking forward to avenging this loss.

"Huo Yanluo, victory!"

As the referee elder made his announcement, the audience

resounded with vibrant cheers. Although many of the Refiner Faction disciples still had some envious thoughts, they acknowledged Huo Yanluo's talent and were sincerely convinced by him. Since Huo Yanluo was the direct disciple of the Refiner Faction and had also defeated a powerful enemy, this was naturally worth cheering for.

The Refiner Faction was usually on the losing side, and yet this time they had created such a magnificent scene, how could they not be proud and exultant?

“We’re really seeing such fantastic scenes in these finals. Before it was Mugu Buyu and Lin Ming who stole the scene, and now this time it’s our Refiner Faction’s turn!”

“Ha! Now that Senior-apprentice Brother Huo has a medium-grade human-step Flame Essence, he should be able to stop Lin Ming, Huan Xiaodie, and Qin Wuxin. Although, I just don’t know how he will compare to someone like Mugu Buyu or Jiang Baoyun. Even if he’s not their match, that means he’s still guaranteed to reach the top 5, or he might even be able to fight for the top 3!”

“This time our Refiner Faction will really gain some face.”

In the contestant waiting area, Lin Ming stroked his chin; he hadn’t expected that Huo Yanluo would actually display a medium-grade human-step Flame Essence and cause such a great stir.

‘It seems that a Flame Essence and Thunder Soul are much more valuable and precious than I had first assumed. If I remember

correctly, Mu Qianyu said that the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was a low-grade earth-step... luckily, Mu Qinghong came to the Seven Profound Valleys, otherwise I fear that I wouldn't be able to display the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. Now that I have the support of Mu Qinghong, I can use any ability I wish. The more strength I show, the more resources I will be able to obtain!'

As Lin Ming was thinking this, he suddenly heard the referee announce, "Sixth round, first match! Lin Ming against Jiang Lanjian!"

Jiang Lanjian? Lin Ming was completely surprised. He didn't think that he would meet Jiang Lanjian so soon!



## Chapter 269 – Lin Ming VS Jiang Lanjian

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Jiang Lanjian also hadn't thought that the match between him and Lin Ming would come so soon. This battle was one he was thoroughly looking forward to. It could be said that out of all his future opponents, Lin Ming was the one he most hoped to fight!

It wasn't because Lin Ming was the strongest. In Jiang Lanjian's opinion, Lin Ming's strength had already reached the top 5, and maybe top 3. But, Lin Ming's spearmanship and actually caused Jiang Lanjian's heart to race with excitement; his understanding of spearmanship was not inferior at all to Jiang Baoyun's swordsmanship!

What Jiang Lanjian most anticipated was the process of fighting with Lin Ming. In doing so, he hoped to increase his own comprehension of swordsmanship!

"Let's go on stage. This battle is one that I've been long awaiting. I will use everything I have in this match." Jiang Lanjian looked at Lin Ming, his eyes blazing with fighting spirit. His footsteps were quick, he had already appeared on the martial stage.

Lin Ming also launched Golden Roc Shattering the Void. His body flickered and he suddenly appeared 100 feet away from Jiang Lanjian.

The entire audience held their breath, paying close attention to this battle between a sword genius and a spear genius.

This match was one they were all impatiently hoping for, even more than Lin Ming's later fight with Jiang Baoyun. This was because Lin Ming and Jiang Lanjian's strength probably weren't too far off. Although the current Lin Ming who was in the spotlight seemed better, Jiang Lanjian still hadn't revealed the cards in his hands.

Qin Xingxuan unconsciously gripped her hands tight. Out of all the seeded players, Jiang Lanjian was the one she had contacted the most. They had been in close proximity a few times, and she was clearly able to feel the great power that emanated from Jiang Lanjian. This power even seemed to be above her master, Mister Muye.

If Jiang Lanjian was placed within Sky Fortune Kingdom, his strength would at least be equal to a middle Houtian master.

Jiang Lanjian was only around 19 or 20 years old. As for her master Mister Muye, he was already over 100 years old. This difference alone already stated the evident disparity between them.

As Qin Xingxuan thought back to over half a year ago when she had accompanied her master to see Lin Ming in the Great Clarity Pavilion's kitchen, she was overcome with many emotions. She had absolutely never imagined that the young boy from that time would grow even stronger than her master in less than a single year!

Jiang Lanjian flicked the longsword in his hand, a sharp energy emitting outwards. As he stood there, he seemed like a towering

mountain peak, his lofty sword wind blowing from all directions, sweeping away the world.

Chi chi chi!

Lin Ming could clearly hear Jiang Lanjian's sword wind piercing his own aura. In comparison to Lin Ming's calm aura that was like an immovable mountain, Jiang Lanjian's sword wind obviously had a much greater attack power.

“Graceful Sword!”

As Jiang Lanjian stuck out with his sword, its speed was beyond incredible! His figure became a series of phantoms, and the sword light condensed into a fine line. Hidden within the air, it was almost invisible.

This was highly compressed true essence, its speed was simply frightening!

How could Lin Ming block this?

Lin Ming's vision widened. In his eyes, it also appeared that the sword light had vanished. However, he still had his perception, and the wind around him whispered to him where that sword wind was moving.

Golden Roc Shattering the Void!

Lin Ming instantly vanished from where he was, even the tiles under his feet cracked apart!

Cha cha cha cha!

As soon as Jiang Lanjian turned around, he cut out with 36 sword strikes!

Every single sword light was like a thin line, concise to the extreme. Highly compressed true essence was imbued within the sword energy – it was incomparably sharp!

Not only that, but all of Jiang Lanjian's sword strokes came from inconceivably tricky angles. It was just impossible to determine the trajectory of the sword, they could not be seen!

In the audience, as Zhang Yanzhao witnessed this display of sword skill, he let out a long breath of air. The true essence that Jiang Lanjian poured into his sword light wasn't strong – it could even be said to be weak – but after being highly compressed, it became truly fierce and keen.

His own Blood King's Triple Murder had a powerful striking force that was extremely startling. With just a saber strike, he had been able to shatter the arena and match a late Houtian realm master!

In terms of just that striking force, Jiang Lanjian could be said to

be inferior to him. But the key point was, would he ever have the opportunity to use this strike, considering Jiang Lanjian's speed?

Although the time it took for Blood King's Triple Murder to gather strength was very short, it still took almost a breath of time. To a martial arts master, that was already more than enough time!

At that point, Lin Ming had been standing still on his area and allowing him to freely strike. But if it were Jiang Lanjian fighting him, he would instantly appear in front of him. What would happen then?

As Zhang Yanzhao imagined himself facing Jiang Lanjian's pervasive sword light, he broke into a cold sweat. As he ran the hypothetical scenario in his mind, he realized that once he was covered by this sword light, he would be defeated without a doubt!

"It seems I looked down wrongly on the Seven Profound Valleys' direct disciples. I thought that this time I could reach the first five, but it seems that I can't even deal with a mere Jiang Lanjian. It will be difficult to reach the top five! Lin Ming's fighting style is similar to mine – it is absolute suppression by force and aura, and his weapon is also meant for sweeping away armies of enemies, it isn't one that excels at speed. So just how will he deal with this?

Jiang Lanjian's attacks didn't give an earth shattering feeling, but they were peerlessly sharp and approached the extreme of speed. Jiang Lanjian's attacks and Zhang Yanzhao's were on two different ends of the spectrum. Zhang Yanzhao couldn't imagine any way for Lin Ming to block Jiang Lanjian's sword. Did this mean that it was time for Lin Ming's winning streak to come to an

end?

This thought appeared not only in Zhang Yanzhao's mind, but also in most of the Seven Profound Valleys' elders'. The Sword Faction was well known as the wealthiest and strongest faction within the Seven Profound Valleys. These rumors were not groundless. They wholeheartedly pursued the path of the sword, swift and fierce, endless variation, quick, sharp, all of these traits were displayed at the highest level by Jiang Lanjian's hand!

On the martial stage, Lin Ming was continuously forced back dozens of feet until he finally reached the edge of the stage. There was nowhere left to go. His spear still contained the power of mountains and oceans as before, but when facing Jiang Lanjian's sword he had only been able to use Flowers in the Storm to block, and wasn't able to overcome the avalanche of sword light.

Still, Lin Ming had another way.

When Lin Ming had fought Zhu Yan, Zhu Yan's sword skills had already reached a high degree of proficiency. Still, Lin Ming had managed to keep him down. For every 3 or 4 sword strikes that Zhu Yan released, Lin Ming only used a single spear. By depending on Flow like Silk, he had been able to use that vastly dangerous vibrating true essence to redirect most of Zhu Yan's sword light.

But Jiang Lanjian's strength was far superior to that of Zhu Yan! His sword light was condensed to the extreme, where it was sufficient to break through the vibrating true essence.

But what if this vibrating true essence was combined with the power of the True Dragon?

In that split-second, Lin Ming's true essence turned into a vividly pure azure color!

Endless azure true essence gushed forth!

Ding ding ding ding ding ding ding!

Jiang Lanjian's countless sword lights poured onto that spear light like a torrential rain shower. In that moment, Jiang Lanjian only felt as if his sword were striking against a mountain. Lin Ming's spear was fused with a heavy vibrating true essence that emerged endlessly. No matter how condensed or thin his sword light was, he still wasn't able to pierce through!

Peng peng peng!

Jiang Lanjian's sword light was abruptly dispersed by the vibrations!

The vast tide of azure true essence continuously welled forth. No matter how quick Jiang Lanjian's sword light was, or how many cuts he made, they were all completely blocked by this tremendous azure true essence. If a normal person were to defend using their true essence, then Jiang Lanjian would have long since broken through their defense. As for Lin Ming, his azure true essence continued to grow, immovable!

Facing this great resistance, Jiang Lanjian felt as if his sword was a fish that was stuck in mud; his speed dropped precipitously!

“Mm? My heartbeat!?”

Jiang Lanjian was shocked. In that instant, he had felt the rhythm of his heartbeat being affected by that vast tide of vibrating true essence. It was as if all the blood in his body was trying to flow in reverse, and all of the true essence within his meridians was running amok in complete disorder.

Just what was going on!?!?

Jiang Lanjian's expression changed, “Is this the power of vibration? You've comprehended a Concept?”

“Concept?” Lin Ming was slightly stunned. He had managed to comprehend the Concept of Wind because he cultivated Golden Roc Shattering the Void. But as for other Concepts, he had no understanding of them, and he didn't have the time to ponder or meditate on them either.

When he had fused the azure true essence with Flow like Silk, the effect was much better. Of course, this was only from a preliminary fusion of the reverse scale blood. If he were able to display the full prestige of the reverse scale blood, it would definitely be stronger. No wonder the Sorcerer had listed the reverse scale blood as the most precious treasure within the Sorcerer Holy Land.



The audience was at a loss from the sudden change in the battle. They had only seen that Jiang Lanjian had released that incomparably sharp and deadly sword light a moment ago, and then he was actually forced back by Lin Ming's spear. They were just unclear as to what had happened during that time.

Zhang Yanzhao felt like his mind had fogged over. He thought that Lin Ming would surely have lost at that moment, and he wasn't clear why the tables had suddenly turned.

"Elder Jiang, what do you think just happened a moment ago?" It wasn't only the audience that was confused, even most of the elders failed to see the deep and profound mysteries and principles within Lin Ming's spear. They hadn't yet experienced the power of vibration personally; it was something that was difficult to see with just one's eyes.

Elder Jiang was a Great Elder of the Sword Faction. Jiang Lanjian was a child that he had single-handedly raised up.

"It's a kind of Concept."

When Elder Jiang spoke up about this so-called Concept, it was in truth a utilization of a natural Law. Without a doubt, the spear that Lin Ming had used had contained a Law a moment ago. This Law was able to dismantle Jiang Lanjian's onslaught.

"Concept?" A 16 year old little boy was able to comprehend a Concept and utilize a Law!? This boy's perception is just too

ridiculous! Has Lanjian even comprehended a Concept?”

“He has, but his is inferior to his opponent’s!” Elder Jiang’s voice sank as he said this. Jiang Lanjian’s talent was absolutely amazing. If it wasn’t for the fact that Jiang Baoyun was an even more amazing individual, Jiang Lanjian would have no doubt been the direct disciple.

Jiang Lanjian was much older than Lin Ming, and he had only been able to barely touch upon the Concept threshold with personalized guidance. A Concept was a utilization of the power of Laws. The power of Laws was the underlying strength and origin source of every force in the entire universe. To want to comprehend this through meditation was easier said than done!

From this aspect, Lin Ming was far more dazzling and superior to Jiang Lanjian!

On the martial stage, Lin Ming was quietly thinking. To say that his power of vibration was a Concept wasn’t wrong.

Flow like Silk could be said to be the Law of Vibration. It was the fusion of that Law with the countless tiny units within the human body. Nearly every martial artist within Sky Spill Continent didn’t even know that the human body was comprised of countless tiny units; it would simply be impossible for them to be able to comprehend this Law through meditation.

“Lin Ming, you give me too many surprises!” Jiang Lanjian took a deep breath, and the true essence within his body began to

undergo a subtle change. His aura became mercurial, elusive, and capricious like the wind.

Jiang Lanjian had already touched the threshold of the Concept of Wind. Under the instruction of the Sword Faction's Great Elder, he had been able to combine this Concept of Wind into his own sword. This ability was Jiang Lanjian's trump card, and now he had to choose but to use it. But to tell the truth, even with the advantage of this Concept, Jiang Lanjian had no certainty that he would win. To him, Lin Ming was simply an immeasurably deep ocean – he was unable to estimate exactly how deep his limit was.

“Concept of Wind!”

Jiang Lanjian's sword light which had started as a thin line suddenly scattered out. His sword energy was like the wind, without a shadow and without a trace!

Lin Ming's eyes brightened, Concept of Wind!?

The Concept of Wind could actually be used in this way?

# Chapter 270 – Concept Showdown

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Lin Ming had already comprehended the Concept of Wind a long time ago. The basis for his comprehension of the Concept of Wind was the top movement skill from the Realm of the Gods, ‘Golden Roc Shattering the Void’.

‘Golden Roc Shattering the Void’ was created by a senior Supreme Elder who had watched the cataclysmic battle between a Golden-winged Roc and a True Dragon. Afterwards, he had gone into closed seclusion for 60 years to meditate and comprehend the deep mysteries behind it. It could be said that the wind-attribute God Beast, the Golden-winged Roc, was the original ancestor of all wind. If the Concept of Wind was comprehended from its movements, the lofty heights of its boundary could be imagined!

Lin Ming’s perception wasn’t amazingly high, but it was by no means low. After a very long time, he had been able to trace upon the most basic superficial knowledge of ‘Golden Roc Shattering the Void’. Still, this little bit wasn’t something that a normal martial artist of the Sky Spill Continent could ever compare to. Even a wind-attribute martial artist who thoroughly studied wind true essence for their entire life would not be able to achieve something like this.

This could be called different starting points between their comprehensions of the Concept of Wind. Lin Ming’s starting point was simply much, much higher, it wasn’t something that a disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys could catch up to if they diligently trained for their entire life. It was just like how a common martial artist had a completely different starting point compared to a disciple of a great sect.

Although Lin Ming had understood a very high boundary of the Concept of Wind, in terms of utilizing its abilities, he could only find out through his own experiences. Lin Ming understood how to use the Concept of Wind for movement, but he didn't know that the Concept of Wind could also be used in attacking.

'I have to see just how the Concept of Wind can be used offensively, this is just a wonderful inspiration!' Lin Ming activated his soul force, tracing each and every action of Jiang Lanjian's movements with his perception.

Jiang Lanjian's sword seemed to be fused into the air. One couldn't even see the blade, they only saw brilliantly flashing sword lights.

Hu hu hu hu!

All of the surrounding wind was attracted by Jiang Lanjian's sword energy, creating a massive cyclone.

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"It's getting windy here!" Everyone in the audience felt a sudden change with the wind in the air, as if every single air current was converging onto the center of the stage.

"How is this possible? The martial stage has protective array formations, Jiang Lanjian's true essence shouldn't be able to break

through it!”

Many of the disciples expressed surprise and wonder. At this moment, a Sword Faction disciple stuck out his chest and proudly said, “Heh, what do you know? A Concept is a power of Laws! Senior-apprentice Brother Jiang has already firmly grasped the power of a Law; it’s just as if he were overlooking us from the top of the highest cliff. How could this power that comes from the origin of all existence be stopped by a Houtian level protection array!?”

The Power of Laws... it didn’t even need to break through, but could still penetrate a Houtian level array formation? Regardless of whether it was a disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys, 36 countries, or 16 martial families, all of them were beyond startled. This was simply too abnormal!

“If one can comprehend a Concept, they can ignore an array formation? Then can an Array Faction disciple who has comprehended a Concept fight against someone who has also comprehended a Concept?” A martial artist from the 36 countries humbly asked.

The Sword Faction disciple looked at that disciple with disdain, “Humph, you think that it’s so easy to comprehend a Concept? Its power is just too remote for the likes of you. Let alone your 36 countries, even in the entire younger generation of our Seven Profound Valleys, the number of people who have managed to comprehend a Concept can be counted on a single hand!”

“It’s not difficult to use an array formation to suppress a

Concept, it just needs an array master to also have comprehended that Concept and then add that Concept into the array formation!

Can be counted on a single hand?

Hearing this number, many of the disciples present gasped. When this disciple mentioned younger generation, that meant all disciples that were 26 or younger. That included not just the geniuses of this Total Faction Martial Meeting, but even the disciples of the last Martial Meeting, and the Martial meeting before that.

With all of these talents added together, the number of people who have managed to comprehend a Concept still could be counted on a single hand?

If this number was true, then Jiang Lanjian's perception was absolutely monstrous. If it wasn't for the even more abnormal Jiang Baoyun, then Jiang Lanjian would certainly have been the Sword Faction's direct disciple.

On the martial stage, the wind was blowing faster and faster, the air currents gathering to an extreme. Jiang Lanjian moved, his body suddenly blurring.

“Absolute Murder Breeze Blade!”

In that instant, all the wind in the air seemed to come to a standstill. Jiang Lanjian thrust out his sword, and 72 fierce sword

energies molded into wind blades that pierced towards Lin Ming's side.

However, Jiang Lanjian's sword had vanished into the wind; the wind of the world was his sword!

Lin Ming's eyes flashed with a bright light. True essence poured into the wind, and the sword melted into the wind. Using the wind as a sword, this was another way to utilize the Concept of Wind?

The long spear in Lin Ming's hand began to tremble, the vibrating true essence within howling into the air, responding to Lin Ming's desire to block Jiang Lanjian's sword energy.

But at this moment, his pupils suddenly contracted.

Lin Ming hadn't imagined that the first thing he would see coming at him was not the sword energy that Jiang Lanjian had released, but the hardened eyes of Jiang Lanjian!

Mm!?

Lin Ming was shocked, his movement speed was actually quicker than the sword energy!?!

Cha!

The longsword drew out an arc. Jiang Lanjian was actually a step



faster than his own sword energy, he arrived in front of Lin Ming first, his sword stabbing out!

At such a close distance and with the fast sword fused with the Concept of Wind, it was impossible for Lin Ming to dodge, and he didn't have time to lift his spear! At this critical moment, Lin Ming's palm formed a saber, and he slapped down on Jiang Lanjian's sword!

Keeping off a saber with his hand!?

This was madness, utter madness!

The minds of everyone in the audience flashed with this thought. A sword and a spear were different. It was possible to keep off a spear by pushing down on the spear shaft, but a sword had two bladed sides, and this sword also contained an incomparably keen sword energy. Not only that, but the sword wielder was the sword talent Jiang Lanjian!

Even darksteel would be cut apart by Jiang Lanjian's sword!

Did Lin Ming not want this hand anymore!?

In that flash of light, the audience simply didn't have time to reflect on what was happening. Lin Ming's hand had already slapped down on top of the sword!

A turbulent azure true essence raged out!

The vibrating true essence was just like the tide of the ocean as it rushed the sword blade.

Chi chi chi!

Jiang Lanjian's blade was severely sharp, it endlessly sliced open true essence, but the azure true essence was simply endless; it could not be cut apart!

Jiang Lanjian was greatly surprised, he tried to arouse the true essence in his body to break apart Lin Ming's azure true essence, but at this moment, he felt his own sword violently shake. Lin Ming's true essence had penetrated through to his sword, scattering his sword energy.

“What!?”

Jiang Lanjian was shocked, he immediately pulled back his sword and withdrew like a storm. But in the moment that he retreated, the 72 sword energies that he had released earlier rushed around him, piercing towards Lin Ming!

This was the sword energy that he had previously sent forth. He had fused them completely into the wind. From the start until now, there had been no gap in this all-out attack, it was simply overwhelming!

Lin Ming had just blocked Jiang Lanjian's attack, and hadn't yet

fully recovered from it. He was just unable to resist this blow!

Lin Ming shouted out and flew backwards. At the same time, the azure light protecting him suddenly rose like a deep sea sun!

Heretical God Force – open!

The azure true essence poured out without reservation, torrent upon torrent of blazing blue light!

Puff puff puff puff puff puff puff!

Although he had just managed to barely force away most of the sword energy, part of the sharp sword energy that contained the Concept of Wind managed to pierce through the true essence protecting Lin Ming. Even though he had opened the Heretical God Force, that sword energy had still made its way through and cut into his flesh!

However, Lin Ming's bodily defense had transformed after his experience in the Sorcerer Pagoda, and his body was tough to an abnormal degree!

As blood oozed from his wounds, Lin Ming was forced back dozens of feet until he stopped. He had been injured by 13 sword strokes!

After the azure true essence that protected his body weakened, the sword energy also weakened. As it cut into Lin Ming's tough

flesh, it only cut less than an inch deep. To a martial artist with true essence at the Altering Muscle or Bone Forging stage, this could only be considered a light superficial wound!

Seeing Lin Ming stand on the martial stage as if nothing had happened, the audience all gaped at him.

This... was Lin Ming's body made from iron? Even iron would have been reduced to pieces!

He had kept off the sword with his hand. The hand was fine, and the sword had been forced away!

He had used his body to directly withstand the sword energy, and he had only received a light wound!

This defensive power was just an anomaly!

It had to be said that the sword and sword energy were sent out by Jiang Lanjian! And he had also fused the Concept of Wind into his strikes!

The offensive attack power of the Sword Faction was number one within the entire Seven Profound Valleys! And Jiang Lanjian was the second ranked talent of the Sword Faction's younger generation. His sword energy could easily slice apart darksteel!

In the contestant waiting area, Zhang Yanzhao was surging with emotions, his skin crawling with goosebumps. He imagined that if

he had exchanged places with Lin Ming and had to face Jiang Lanjian who could use the Concept of Wind, then he would be defeated without a doubt! This...was simply too depressing a thought.

Let alone the late 72 sword energies, Zhang Yanzhao wouldn't even be able to keep off that first sword strike of Jiang Lanjian's. It was simply too fast!

There was no way he could keep off a sword with just his hands. When he had fought Lin Ming, he had used his own hand to stop Lin Ming's spear shaft, and his hand had almost shattered. If he tried to keep off Jiang Lanjian's sword, then he might as well cut off his own hand.

“This is the trump card that Jiang Lanjian has? He actually comprehended the Concept of Wind! If Jiang Lanjian hadn't encountered Lin Ming this time, then how many people would have been able to block his sword skill? This Lin Ming is just too abnormal. If a sword skill like that cannot defeat him, then exactly what can?”

.....

On the martial stage, Lin Ming was holding his spear as he stood, staring at Jiang Lanjian. ‘The Concept of Wind is truly endless and crafty in its usage. It is simply traceless! Jiang Lanjian is truly a genius; he managed to simultaneously fuse the Concept of Wind into his own attack and movements and create his own sword technique. If it wasn't for my fortuitous encounters in the Sorcerer Pagoda, I would have been defeated by this sword! If just Jiang

Lanjian is this powerful, then what degree will Jiang Baoyun have arrived at? It seems I mistakenly underestimated the geniuses of the Seven Profound Valleys, after all, they are 3 or 4 years older than me!’

Jiang Lanjian’s eyes shined brightly. ‘The sword energy was useless against him? That azure true essence that protects Lin Ming is too strong. Not only that, but his body’s defensive capabilities are astonishing. I really do not know what is so peculiar about his body, or how he managed to cultivate that azure true essence!’

‘If sword energy is useless, then I can only directly attack with my sword!’

As Jiang Lanjian took a step forwards, the Concept of Wind rose up again!

“Seven Swords Absolute Summit!”

The sword light entered into the wind. This time, Jiang Lanjian chose to directly attack with his sword.

Without the strange sword energy, Jiang Lanjian’s attack was much clearer. Lin Ming stimulated his azure vibrating true essence, and dispersed Jiang Lanjian’s attack with a single spear strike!

However, although the attack was repulsed, the sword energy

stayed. The sword energy had fused with the Concept of Wind – it could not be scattered. Whether it was a saber, sword, spear, or any other weapon, none of them were able to cut the wind!

As the two youths fought, their battle became fiercer and faster, but Lin Ming's heart was becoming increasingly clear.

‘This wind will never disperse, so the sword energy will also not disperse. This way of attacking with the Concept of Wind... I understand it!’

‘Then I'll just have to experience for myself how to fuse the Concept of Wind into the spear!’

In a split-second when Jiang Lanjian's sword was drawn back, Lin Ming's spear suddenly turned into countless phantom mirages...

“Flowers in the Storm!”

Out of all the moves in the ‘Foundation Spear Technique’, none of them were more suitable to display the Concept of Wind than Flowers in the Storm!

The spear light fused into the wind, with no shadow and no form. True essence suddenly swelled forth, and the wind on the stage suddenly turned into countless sharp blades that pierced towards Jiang Lanjian!

This sudden turn of events caused Jiang Lanjian to cry out in surprise. With a stuffy cough, he anxiously retreated. As he tried to suppress the roiling blood in his body, he cast an incredulous look towards Lin Ming.

“This... this is...”

“Concept of Wind!?!?”

This is impossible!

Impossible!



## Chapter 271 – Stealing From A Master

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Jiang Lanjian's face flashed with bewilderment. Lin Ming had obviously used the Concept of Wind a moment ago. Not only that, but he was able to faintly feel that Lin Ming's Concept of Wind boundary was even higher than his own! It was as if he had touched upon the origin of all wind!

How was this possible?

There was complete silence in the entire area for several breaths of time. Suddenly, the noisy sound of discussion broke the quiet.

“Lin Ming actually comprehended the Concept of Wind? How did that happen?”

The Sword Faction disciple that had been so haughtily explaining the difficulty in comprehending the Concept of Wind to everyone around him that would listen, suddenly found himself unable to accept this new reality. In the entire Seven Profound Valleys' younger generation, the number of people that could understand a Concept could be counted on a single hand, and they had all did so in their later years when they had reached 19 or 20 years of age.

But as for Lin Ming, he was a mere 16 years old, and he also came from the pitiful background of the 36 countries. Who had taught him how to comprehend the Concept of Wind? Had he learnt it himself?

“Haha! You just said that we 36 countries' disciples couldn't

comprehend the Concept of Wind, and look at that! Now what, huh!?” All of the 36 countries’ disciples that heard the bragging of the Sword Faction disciple suddenly felt extremely proud and glorious. Before, they had been talked down to like little country bumpkins who had wandered into a bustling major city, and their hearts had already lit with a simmering fire. Before, they didn’t know what a Concept of Wind was, nor that Lin Ming had also managed to understand it, so they could only shut up as others boasted around them.

Now, they could finally come back.

“Haha, a little pitiful Concept of Wind, even if the Seven Profound Valleys doesn’t have over 5 people that can comprehend it, it’s not anything to someone as cool and awesome as Lin Ming.”

“Maybe Lin Ming hadn’t even understood the Concept of Wind, but comprehended it after watching Jiang Lanjian display it. Comprehending this sort of small fry stuff would probably only take Lin Ming half an incense stick of time.”

“Right, right, right! Or else why would Lin Ming drag this fight out for so long? The reason is because he was meditating on the Concept of Wind from Jiang Lanjian’s blade!

This disciple’s wonderful fantasies were immediately approved and welcomed by everyone. In their minds, the Concept of Wind sounded very powerful, but to the omnipotent Lin Ming, it should be enough just tossing it a few thoughts, it was just absolutely nothing.

Hearing this idea spread through the crowd, the Seven Profound Valleys' Sword Faction disciple could only force a smile, he was disinclined to argue with them. Did they think that the Concept of Wind was some cabbage that they could eat whenever they wanted?

In the Grand Hall of the Seven Profound Valleys, several Great Elders had the feeling that this was something they couldn't immediately accept, even if placed in front of them; they had simply never seen a genius of this level before.

If he could actually comprehend a Concept, then there was probably nothing else that Lin Ming couldn't!

A Sword Faction Great Elder lamentably shook his head and said, "Lin Ming not only comprehended the Concept of Wind, but the boundary at which he's done so is very high. Unfortunately, Lanjian's Concept of Wind was his final trump card, but it's too bad he's only showing off his meager skill in front of a true expert."

Shi Zongtian was silent. Jiang Lanjian was already considered a talent among talents, and the Concept of Wind was sufficiently powerful to be called one's secret card.

What a pity it was that Jiang Lanjian's match was against Lin Ming.

As Mu Qinghong looked at the amazing expressions on these old

elders' faces, the smile that crossed hers was growing more and more. She felt that Lin Ming was simply an endless trove of treasure, he always brought new and wonderful surprises.

Something like the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder could be said to be obtained by luck or fortune. Individual cultivation could be enhanced by valuable materials or other rare medicines and treasure. But as for Lin Ming's comprehension of the Concept of Wind, spear skills, and martial intent, all of those depended on his own heart of martial arts and monstrous perception. There was no fortuitous encounter that could ever help him with that.

Spear path, Concept, martial intent, soul force; Lin Ming had made startling progress in all four of these major aspects. Not only that, but his cultivation could also be considered at the pinnacle of his age, and he also had a high thunder origin energy fusion compatibility. With his mere Bone Forging cultivation, he had managed to absorb the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, and his body seemed to contain the bloodline of some ancient beast.

Lin Ming's existence had already exceeded the limits of common sense.

Mu Qinghong secretly thought, "Even Qianyu hadn't completely understood Lin Ming, he is even more wonderful than she had imagined! My Divine Phoenix Island will never let go of a talent like this."

On the martial stage, Jiang Lanjian heaved a heavy sigh. "Lin Ming, I, Jiang Lanjian have never witnessed someone of your talent in my life. I might have already lost this match, but until the

final moment, I will not put down my sword!”

Jiang Lanjian brought his sword in front of him, directed straight at Lin Ming.

“Good, I also want to enjoy a satisfying battle with you.” Lin Ming brightly laughed and then smiled at Jiang Lanjian. Jiang Lanjian’s words were just what he had hoped for, he also wanted to continue dueling with Jiang Lanjian and attain more inspirations about the Concept of Wind.

“Graceful Sword!”

Jiang Lanjian thrust his sword out again, and a strong wind howled around him. Lin Ming’s spear had also fused into the wind, and under the blessing of the Concept of Wind, his spear speed had reached a terrifying degree. One could listen to the sharp cries as the long spear broke through the wind; it seemed as if spear shadows covered the sky!

If there was a weakness in Lin Ming’s spearmanship, that would be that his attack speed was too slow!

But in truth, this really could not be considered a shortcoming. A spear was originally a heavy weapon meant to be used against armies. It emphasized oppressing and overwhelming all opposition by brute strength; it was simply impossible for it to display such an extreme speed like a sword.

Therefore, when Lin Ming had been facing Jiang Lanjian's sword light that seemed everywhere, he was only able to rely on his vibrating true essence to fend it off.

But now, with the Concept of Wind behind his back, his spear wasn't actually much slower than Jiang Lanjian's sword!

Ding ding ding ding ding ding ding!

In a few breathes of time, it was unknown how many times Lin Ming and Jiang Lanjian's spear and sword had exchanged blows. Lin Ming's speed hadn't fallen at all!

Even the surrounding wind began to fall under Lin Ming's sway, condensing into sharp wind blades that attacked Jiang Lanjian!

The elders in the Seven Profound Valleys' Grand Hall were becoming more and more flabbergasted as they watched the match go on. They had thought that Lin Ming's comprehension of the Concept of Wind was at a very high state, but they realized that even they had underestimated him. As this match progressed, Lin Ming was becoming increasingly deft with the Concept of Wind; it was already far beyond anything Jiang Lanjian could hope to compare with.

"I can't imagine how he managed to contemplate this!" The Sword Faction's Great Elder sighed with emotion. To have a 1200 jin Heavy Profound Soft Spear keep up with the speed of a longsword, Lin Ming's comprehension of the Concept of Wind was simply inconceivable.

“I feel like... as Lin Ming continues to progress in this match, it seems that Lin Ming is imitating Lanjian’s moves!”

“Mm!?”

As an elder casually spoke his thoughts, all of them became startled!

Jiang Lanjian’s Graceful Sword was able to hide the sword blade in the wind. When he did so, Lin Ming also hid his spear in the wind!

When Jiang Lanjian condensed blades of wind to attack, so did Lin Ming.

When Jiang Lanjian fused the sword energy into the wind so that the wind would not disperse and the sword energy would not disperse, Lin Ming also fused his spear light into the wind – it was almost the exact same process!

“He is studying Lanjian’s styles.”

“Heavens... did he not comprehend the Concept of Wind before this, and suddenly comprehended it during this fight against Lanjian?”

“That’s impossible, no talent can be like such. He must have

comprehended it a long time ago, but didn't have a master to teach him. He was only able to rely on his heaven defying perception to comprehend the Concept of Wind, but didn't understand just how to use it to attack. Now, he's found inspiration in Lanjian's sword, and his self-taught Concept of Wind has already surpassed Lanjian by many degrees. This young boy its just too terrifying!"

On the martial stage, the outcome was already clear to all. Over 90% of the power of wind was sent by Lin Ming. As for Jiang Lanjian, he wasn't even able to muster 10% of the power of wind.

Bang!

As Jiang Lanjian met Lin Ming's attack, he was forced backwards dozens of feet. He wiped off the blood from the corners of his mouth and put away the longsword in his hand, "I admit defeat."

"Thank you!"

Lin Ming cupped his hands together in respect. He did not say the more formal and polite 'well fought', but instead thanked him. This was naturally because in this fight, Jiang Lanjian had taught him much about how to use the Concept of Wind to attack.

The memories of the Realm of the Gods' Supreme Elder was incomparably fragmented, there were very few complete memories. Although Lin Ming was able to comprehend the Concept of Wind, the memories of the methods of utilization were lost. If it wasn't for Jiang Lanjian, then it would have been a long time before he was able to utilize the Concept of Wind in different



ways.

“Lin Ming, victory!”

With the announcement from the referee elder, many of the Seven Profound Valleys’ disciples gasped together.

Jiang Lanjian had also been defeated!

Qin Wuxin who had mastered Large Success of her Zither Heart, or Huo Yanluo who controlled a Flame Essence, could either of them stop Lin Ming’s winning streak?

Lin Ming turned around to spot Jiang Baoyun watching him in the midst of the crowd. Jiang Baoyun’s two eyes pierced him like twin sword lights, it was impossible not to notice.

Jiang Baoyun faintly smiled. Lin Ming also politely returned a smile, but his heart was feeling quite cold.

Although Lin Ming had defeated Jiang Lanjian, he didn’t feel relaxed at all. In this match, he had already used all of his cards besides Thunderfire Annihilation and the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder.

He had already shown the azure true essence, Concept of Wind, Heretical God Force, and Flow like Silk.

All these abilities had been used, and yet he had still been injured!

Jiang Lanjian's Absolute Murder Breeze Blade was too strong. It was not that Lin Ming didn't want to dodge, but that he couldn't.

It could be said that if Lin Ming hadn't 'stolen' the method to utilize the Concept of Wind in attacks and deprived Jiang Lanjian of his control over the wind, then it would have been extremely difficult for him to win the match!

Now seeing Jiang Baoyun's smile, Lin Ming suddenly remembered that from the start until now, he had never seen an expression of panic, surprise, or astonishment on Jiang Baoyun's face.

Maybe this was because Jiang Baoyun had reached Large Success of his Sword Heart, but it was most likely because he had absolute belief in his own ability!

Regardless of whether it was Mugu Buyu's Essence Integration, Lin Ming's own hidden cards coming out one after another, or even Huo Yanluo's shocking Flame Essence, Jiang Baoyun had maintained a tranquil expression through all of it, just like a light spring afternoon.

The feeling he gave off was as if everything was in the grasp of his palm.

Then... what were Jiang Baoyun's own hidden cards? What did he rely on to be so confident in himself?

If Jiang Lanjian, the second ranked disciple of the Sword Faction was already so formidable, then how strong was the direct disciple, Jiang Baoyun? Just what were the limits of his strength?

Lin Ming let out a long breath. He realized that his own chances of defeating Jiang Baoyun were not high at all!

The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was without a doubt an attack with a monstrous attack power. But a battle didn't look at whose attack power was stronger, but rather who could win.

In terms of attack power, Jiang Lanjian was still inferior to Zhang Yanzhao.

But Zhang Yanzhao could not win against Jiang Lanjian!

This was because he would have already lost before he used the Blood King's Triple Murder!

Like this, could he defeat Jiang Baoyun using the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder?

The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was amazingly strong, but if it could not strike Jiang Baoyun, then it was completely useless.

Would Jiang Baoyun's sword be slower than the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder? Could he dodge it?

Lin Ming surmised the outcome of the future match in his heart, and realized that as long as Jiang Baoyun's sword speed had reached a certain level, and he comprehended another Concept besides the Concept of Wind, then he would definitely lose!

Besides the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, Lin Ming also had Thunderfire Annihilation. But, because the Flame Essence was much weaker and thus imbalanced, Thunderfire Annihilation wouldn't be much stronger than the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. Not only that, but the consumption of energy was tremendous and it took a long period of time to wind up. The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder was currently a much more practical move.

'It looks like I underestimated the Seven Profound Valleys' direct disciples. With Jiang Baoyun's talent, he would also be fantastic if placed within a fourth-grade sect. Not only that, but he is older than me by three years!'

## Chapter 272 – The Hero Of Our Era

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Jiang Lanjian returned to his own seat and quietly watched Lin Ming. He turned to Jiang Baoyun sitting beside him and said, “Lin Ming might join the Sword Faction in the future. Without accident, he will probably become the next first ranked disciple of the Sword Faction, and he might even be the strongest person in the Seven Profound Valleys’ entire younger generation!”

“Maybe.”

Jiang Baoyun faintly replied.

“Aren’t you worried?” Jiang Lanjian looked into Jiang Baoyun’s eyes, hoping to discern something from within them.

“Why should I be worried?”

“Worried that he might steal your position and take your resources. Right now you are the one with the most potential for growth in the entire Seven Profound Valleys’ younger generation, and are also a Sword Faction talent that hasn’t been seen in a hundred years. Before this, the Total Faction and Sword Faction would do whatever it took to raise you. But, if Lin Ming came...”

What Jiang Lanjian said was the truth. This was what 99 out of 100 people would worry about. In the end, the Seven Profound Valleys had limited resources.

Jiang Baoyun laughed, “Take my resources? Haha, Lanjian, do you think you can produce a top Revolving Core master by piling up resources?”

As Jiang Baoyun said this, Jiang Lanjian froze. He wasn’t wrong. One could pile up resources to bring up a Pulse Condensation martial artist, or even a Houtian realm martial artist. If one were truly desperate, they could waste several dozens of Heaven Opening Pills in order to create a Xiantian realm master. But there had never been a case of a truly mighty Revolving Core master being created from any piles of resources. Even if these so-called geniuses wanted to reach the Revolving Core realm, it would be nigh impossible!

Jiang Baoyun said, “If a martial artist wholeheartedly expects and desires only resources from the sect, then his heart of martial arts will suffer and waste away. This sort of person will never become anything great! I am a swordsman, and I will only believe in the sword I hold, not the resources that the sect provides me! Much less, the Seven Profound Valleys is only a third grade sect. In terms of resources, who can we compare to? Can we compare to Divine Phoenix Island? Can we compare to Peacock Mountain?

“When we geniuses are in the Pulse Condensation period, it is possible that our strength can compare to a normal middle Houtian realm, or even late Houtian realm master. This sounds amazing, but the truth is those Houtian realm masters will be inferior to us for their entire lives! They will never step into the Xiantian realm. After we reach into the Xiantian realm, the only ones that can compare to us will be a Xiantian master. These Xiantian realm masters were also the same as us when they were in the Pulse Condensation period, they will have the same talent as

us!

“All of us are geniuses. If I’m worried about just this and cannot blossom as a martial artist, then what qualifications do I have to impact the Revolving Core realm?

“My goal is clear, and that is to pursue the ultimate sword, to find out what lies at the end of the sword path. I do not fear that others will be my rivals; on the contrary, what I fear is that no one will be my opponent! If one day a peerless talent of Sky Spill Continent were to appear in front of me, and I were to be able to surpass his shadow, then I will become one of the true heroes of this era!”

Jiang Baoyun spoke with a manner as if he were looking down on the world. As Jiang Lanjian heard this, he also felt his heart stirring and his emotions surging. Jiang Lanjian’s own talent was already quite good, but in comparison to his Senior-apprentice Brother who was about the same age as him, he had always been a step behind. Jiang Lanjian was thoroughly convinced of his strength.

He said, “Senior-apprentice Brother is correct. For us swordsmen, to have a powerful opponent is what we wish for the most!”

.....

After the match between Lin Ming and Jiang Lanjian, the matches were much quieter. There were no more matches worth

paying attention to in the sixth ground.

During the seven round, fifth match, Zhang Yanzhao faced off against Fang Qi. Fang Qi once again placed down his Nine Circles of Blue Light Arrays, but they were all torn apart by Zhang Yanzhao's Blood King's Triple Murder.

Fang Qi once again suffered a miserable defeat.

Fang Qi was just helpless. The disciples of the Array Faction were best at fighting positional battles, but Zhang Yanzhao's attack power was one of the best among all the contestants. Fang Qi was like a fort, and the Blood King's Absolute Murder was the heaven collapsing landslide. In front of this attack, his Nine Circles of Blue Light Array were just like fragile eggshells.

Eighth round, third match. Zhang Yanzhao against Jiang Lanjian.

In terms of striking power, Zhang Yanzhao naturally surpassed Jiang Lanjian. However, no matter how strong his attack power was, it was all useless if he couldn't use it!

Jiang Lanjian's sword energy turned into a thin line of highly compressed true essence. In a split second, he had sent out several dozen sword strikes. The sword energy weaved out just like a dense net!

This sort of highly compressed sword energy was extremely



sharp and formidable, it was also extremely difficult to destroy.

Jiang Lanjian hadn't used the Concept of Wind. Even without it, he had already placed Zhang Yanzhao into a very difficult situation.

His sword was just like a venomous serpent. Every time, it would pierce through the weak points of Zhang Yanzhao's true essence, and wouldn't give Zhang Yanzhao any chance to condense his true essence.

Zhang Yanzhao couldn't use his full strength. Facing the intense hail of sword energy he was overwhelmed and continuously struck by sword energy. Although he wanted to attack Jiang Lanjian, all he could ever hit was his own shadows; he couldn't even touch the hem of Jiang Lanjian's clothes.

Chi chi chi!

Zhang Yanzhao's arm cuffs and pants were all cleanly sliced off by the sword wind. This was obviously Jiang Lanjian's staying his hand. Otherwise, Jiang Lanjian had the capability to even cut off Zhang Yanzhao's arms and feet.

Zhang Yanzhao sighed and placed back his saber; there was no longer any point in continuing this match. Jiang Lanjian had already given him enough face by going easy, if he continued he would only be disgracing himself.

“I admit defeat.”

“Well fought.” Jiang Lanjian cupped his fists together in respect, and turned around to leave. Although he had struck out with his sword more often, he hadn’t used much true essence. As for Zhang Yanzhao who had been slashing out with massive waves of true essence, he was already panting on the ground.

The disparity was too great!

Before this battle had even started, Zhang Yanzhao had already speculated that he would most likely lose to Jiang Lanjian. But he hadn’t thought that he would lose without being able to force Jiang Lanjian to use the Concept of Wind.

“It is how it is, Yanzhao didn’t lose without cause.” The Elders of the Zhang Family could only sigh. In the fight between Lin Ming and Jiang Lanjian, they hadn’t been able to feel just how strong Jiang Lanjian was. But now that Jiang Lanjian and Zhang Yanzhao fought, the difference in their strength was obvious. Zhang Yanzhao hadn’t even been able to force out his opponent’s trump card.

It was hard to imagine that Lin Ming was able to defeat such a powerhouse that could defeat Zhang Yanzhao without any resistance.

Eighth round, tenth match. Jiang Baoyun against the Puppet Faction’s second disciple, Mugu Jirong.

This match was more or less decided. No one was anxious about it. What was even worse was that Mugu Jirong had lost three puppets. Even if all of his puppets were still fully intact, no one believed that Mugu Jirong had any chance of defeating Jiang Baoyun.

Jiang Baoyun didn't even bring out his sword. He merely used his sword fingers and was able to break through the true essence protecting Mugu Jirong's body.

“Jiang Baoyun, victory!”

When the referee announced this, the entire audience gasped.

Although Mugu Jirong's combat power had drastically fallen, for better or for worse he was still the second ranked disciple of the Puppet Faction. The Puppet Faction was not a weak faction, and their second disciple was far superior in combat than the direct disciples of the Array Faction and Refiner Faction.

This could be seen from the match between Mugu Jirong and Huo Yanluo. At the start, Mugu Jirong was able to easily push Huo Yanluo into a corner. It was only when Huo Yanluo suddenly used a Flame Essence that he won. Otherwise, Mugu Jirong would have inevitably won.

But now that formidable Mugu Jirong hadn't even been able to force Jiang Baoyun to bring out his sword. This difference in their strength was simply too great.

“He’s just too strong! From his first match, Jiang Baoyun had never drawn his sword. He only used his sword fingers to sweep away all his opponents!”

“The Sword Faction was originally the strongest faction in the Seven Profound Valleys, and Jiang Baoyun is the most outstanding talent that the Sword Faction has seen in the last 100 years. His strength is already beyond the imaginations of people like us. Putting aside Jiang Baoyun, even Jiang Lanjian’s talent has already caught up with the Sword Faction’s former direct disciples. Out of the current seven direct disciples, half of them are inferior to Jiang Lanjian! This could be seen from when Jiang Lanjian had defeated Zhang Yanzhao! He won even without using the Concept of Wind!”

“Right, the only reason that Jiang Lanjian lost to Lin Ming is because Lin Ming is too strong, not because Jiang Lanjian is weak. I think that Jiang Lanjian will definitely be able to reach the top 6. As for Lin Ming, he might even reach the top 3!

.....

When Jiang Baoyun walked down from the stage, he saw Mugu Buyu looking at him with a strange smile, making small ‘jejeje’ laughing noises.

Jiang Baoyun and Mugu Buyu were without a doubt the two disciples of this Total Faction Martial Meeting that were popular as the ones with the highest chances to become the champion. Ouyang Ming, who had blossomed in glorious splendor during the last Martial Meeting, was already completely overshadowed by them.

“Jiang Baoyun, you sure are cruel enough. I want to have a look and see just how long you can hide your sword!” Jiang Baoyun hadn’t even used his sword to defeat the second ranked disciple of the Puppet Faction, causing the Puppet Faction to lose face. This caused Mugu Buyu to not feel happy at all.

Jiang Baoyun smiled and said, “I won’t be hiding it much longer, but... you shouldn’t care about me, you should care more about yourself. Against Lin Ming, your little toys might be broken.”

“Lin Ming? Hehehe! You think that I am as useless as that Jiang Lanjian?” Mugu Buyu sneered, “Jiang Baoyun, when you and I fight, I hope that you will still have some cards in your hand. Otherwise, you won’t have the qualifications to force me to use my full strength!”

Jiang Baoyun only smiled, no longer speaking. Mugu Buyu, who had achieved the Essence Integration boundary really was a powerful opponent, but, Jiang Baoyun had a faint instinctual feeling that Lin Ming was the greater threat!

.....

Ninth round, first match. Huan Xiaodie against Mugu Buyu!

When the small, cute, and charming Huan Xiaodie stepped on stage with a cheerful smile, the entire audience thought that this would be an extremely fierce battle. Even Lin Ming was closely watching to have a good look at Mugu Buyu’s strengths. But, no

one had imagined that right after the referee announced the start of the match, that Huan Xiaodie would impishly smile and then simply say, “I admit defeat!”

The entire audience was stunned, even Lin Ming was speechless. Even the worst of the seven direct disciples, Fang Qi, had fought a symbolic battle against Mugu Buyu, causing him to reveal his Essence Integration boundary.

This Huan Xiaodie should at least be stronger than Fang Qi, but she didn’t seem to care about the face of a direct disciple at all, instead admitting defeat as soon as she could.

The audience was somewhat disappointed that this splendid match didn’t come to fruition. However, that disappointment quickly faded as another heavyweight match began.

“Ninth round, third match. Lin Ming against Qin Wuxin!”

The Zither Faction was the most understated and low-key faction of the Seven Profound Valleys. They didn’t have many people, but their disciples were not weak. on the contrary, they had many strange and peculiar attack methods that were exceedingly difficult to deal with.

Qin Wuxin’s personality was also very low-key. Many people only knew that she was young and had reached Large Success of her Zither Heart. But as for just how strong she was, no one was actually clear.

Lin Ming also didn't know anything about Qin Wuxin, but he knew approximately what it meant to reach Large Success of the Zither Heart.

At first, when Qin Ziya had been at the peak of Houtian realm, he had taken a Heaven Opening Pill in order to breakthrough to the Xiantian realm. But because of a flaw in his Zither Heart, he had failed.

Afterwards, Qin Ziya had gone out exploring the world, traveling to the deep valleys and glens, finally spending a full decade to successfully cultivate Large Success of his Zither Heart!

Qin Ziya had originally been a musician, and he had very outstanding attainments in zither skills. If he had not started his cultivation at such a late stage, he most likely would already be at the Xiantian realm. Even so, Qin Ziya still used a full 10 years of adventuring to temper his Zither Heart to the Large Success stage. But in comparison to Qin Wuxin, the disparity between them was too great, it was enough to horrify anyone!

# Chapter 273 – Sonic Attack

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Lin Ming and Qin Wuxin's match caused the audience to seethe with burning excitement.

Qin Wuxin was a very popular and well-known figure within the Seven Profound Valleys. Out of the seven great direct disciples, two were women. One was Qin Wuxin of the Zither Faction, and the other was Huan Xiaodie of the Mirage Faction.

Compared to the small and exquisite, eternally child-like Huan Xiaodie, Qin Wuxin had grown up as a slender and magnificently proportioned woman in all aspects; she was more popular by far. Many of the Seven Profound Valleys' disciples had already unconsciously taken Qin Wuxin as their heart's forbidden dream crush.

“Zither Faction disciple Qin Wuxin, please advise.”

Qin Wuxin stood still on the martial stage, her white gown floating gently around her, her appearance graceful and elegant. Because she had reached Large Success of her Zither Heart, she had a sort of speechless ethereal quality that couldn't be touched upon. She calmly took down the zither on her back and gently waved her long sleeves. The zither suspended itself in front of her in midair, as if it had been placed on an invisible platform.

The audience's cheers for Qin Wuxin were like an overwhelming tide that wouldn't end. However, Qin Wuxin only silently played her zither, as she sat there seemingly unaffected by anything else.



“Sky Fortune Kingdom’s Lin Ming, please advise.”

The first course of action that Lin Ming took was to stimulate the azure true essence to protect his body. Lin Ming didn’t know much about the Zither Faction’s types of attacks, so it was best to be overly cautious.

As the referee elder announced the start of the match, Qin Wuxin’s ten fingers plucked on the zither strings, and a magnificent melody flowed from them like a sweet spring mountain stream. This melody seemed simple, but Lin Ming felt a trace of true essence dissolved into the notes, as if it could shock the entire martial stage.

Although Lin Ming had great confidence in himself, he wouldn’t let Qin Wuxin play her weird little zither tunes. He clearly remembered that when Qin Wuxin had fought Jing Chanyu, she had only needed to pluck a few strings in order to shatter Jing Chanyu’s earth-attribute protective barrier as if it was some frozen brittle glass, immediately causing it to burst. Not only that, but Qin Wuxin hadn’t even allowed a smidgen of true essence to escape, to the point that Jing Chanyu hadn’t even realized that Qin Wuxin had attacked.

The young lady of the Zither Faction was no weakling. It was also because her nature was to remain low-key, so no one had realized the depth of her skills until now.

The Heavy Profound Soft Spear came out, and Lin Ming thrust

forth straight towards Qin Wuxin's chest.

Azure true essence howled in the air, and the strength of the True Dragon endlessly gushed forth, mixing with Flow like Silk's power of vibration. With these two forces superimposing upon each other, this spear of Lin Ming's was seemingly impossible to resist. Even if it were Jiang Lanjian he would have to move.

Qin Wuxin turned her fingers, and her pinky plucked a string. Suddenly, an invisible sound wave shot forth like an arrow, smashing into Lin Ming's spearpoint!

Zhi—

Lin Ming only felt an extremely high-frequency true essence shock his Heavy Profound Soft Spear, fiercely clashing with the azure true essence.

Both true essences contained an extremely powerful vibration. After they impacted, a shrill grating sound rang through the air, just like a sharp knife running across glass!

The martial stage's protective light curtain was unable to isolate sound. Many of the lower cultivation disciples on the edges could only cover their eyes and run backwards, their faces pale.

'Mm? A note blocked my spear?'

Lin Ming was slightly surprised. At that time, although the azure

true essence that was contained within his Heavy Profound Soft Spear wasn't scattered, the force of vibration was cancelled out. Even if this spear continued forth, it would no longer have the same striking power unless Lin Ming stabbed out again.

Qin Wuxin had only let loose a single sonic wave through her note, and she was actually able to keep off his attack. This method of approach was much calmer than Jiang Lanjian!

However, Lin Ming knew that the reason Qin Wuxin could do this was not because she was stronger than Jiang Lanjian, but because her soundwaves contained an intense vibration.

This was the same result as Flow like Silk from a different method!

In truth, a soundwave was simply a vibration in the air. If one were to pour true essence into this soundwave, the true essence would naturally vibrate along with the soundwave, and the frequency of vibration could be changed depending on the intensity of the sonic wave.

'It's not that my azure true essence lost, but my Flow like Silk lost to Qin Wuxin's power of vibration!'

Qin Wuxin's musical note wasn't able to scatter the endless azure true essence, but it was able to directly counter the azure true essence's vibration. This caused Lin Ming to be extremely startled. There were many missing sections of Flow like Silk from the memory fragment of that Supreme Elder. Lin Ming was only able

to deduce and comprehend the training method for Flow like Silk after meditating over the 'Body Tearing Bone Shattering Fist' for a long time. It had already been half a year since then, and his progress to reaching the next boundary was extremely slow.

And today, his Flow like Silk actually lost to Qin Wuxin's music which contained the force of vibration.

The audience saw Qin Wuxin force back Lin Ming with a single note, and all of them suddenly went into a rabid frenzy. All of Qin Wuxin's many supporters began to cheer at the top of their lungs, shouting out supportive messages to Qin Wuxin, wanting her to end Lin Ming's winning streak.

Qin Wuxin ignored all of the audience's deafening cheers as if she didn't hear them. During this short fight, even she had been shocked. The vibrations of her zither music had always been able to go everywhere, they could penetrate any defense and destroy all. When Qin Wuxin had gone out adventuring to temper her Zither Heart, she had met many high level vicious beasts that were entirely covered in armor, and yet she had only needed a single note to easily slay them.

But now, her zither music had penetrated into Lin Ming's long spear, yet hadn't been able to scatter his true essence; she had only barely managed to counter his attack. No wonder Jiang Lanjian had lost under his hand.

Qin Wuxin spread back her flowing silk sleeves, and a gentle sound emitted from the zither strings, directly hitting Lin Ming.

This sonic wave attack was invisible with no form. By the time one heard the sound, they were already under attack!

This was the first time that Lin Ming had faced this sort of invisible attack, and he was caught off guard. The azure true essence in his body was violently agitated, and Lin Ming gave a smothered cough, retreating a few steps as the blood in his body surged.

“Good weird attack!”

If Lin Ming had ordinary true essence protecting him instead of the azure true essence, he might have already been crushed by that single note!

But even with the azure true essence, it could still only withstand two or three more of these attacks in such a short time. If it took any more, his true essence protection would break. When that time came, Lin Ming would have to face Qin Wuxin’s sonic wave attacks with his bare body.

Although Lin Ming’s body was physically tough, it still wasn’t as tough as a high level vicious beast. And even a high level vicious beast that came under assault from this sound wave attack would crumble apart. The outcome could be imagined once Lin Ming lost the protection of his true essence.

Qin Wuxin’s delicate eyebrows furrowed together. Her sound attack had actually been calmly met and taken by Lin Ming. The

formidability of his defensive power had surpassed her imagination.

Her ten fingers flashed atop the zither and a series of notes howled forth; this was a full on invisible mass attack!

In the audience, Ouyang Ming's eyes jumped as he saw this. The Zither Faction's attack methods were too strange. Even if he was the one that was to face Qin Wuxin on the martial stage, this match would give him an incomparable headache. This sort of attack was invisible and formless, and was just too difficult to defend against. Not only that, but every soundwave contained a powerful attack power. Once hit, even one's internal organs would be damaged.

How would Lin Ming respond to this?

It wasn't just Ouyang Ming who wanted to know, but also the many elders of the Seven Profound Valleys were looking at Lin Ming with anticipation from the Grand Hall. They wanted to see just how he would deal with this. It was very obvious that this was Lin Ming's first time facing off against someone from the Zither Faction. Otherwise, when he faced Qin Wuxin's attacks a moment ago, he wouldn't have just stood there without any reaction.

In the Grand Hall, an old woman was smiling, her grin spreading cheek to cheek. She was the Zither Faction's Sovereign, and was also Qin Wuxin's master. These past years, Jiang Baoyun had stood in the spotlight, completely overshadowing the accomplishments of all the other direct disciples. It wasn't wrong to call Jiang Baoyun the Sword Faction's greatest talent that they had seen in

the last 100 years, after all, Jiang Baoyun's talent spoke for itself. But as for Qin Wuxin, she was also a rare genius of the Zither Faction. It was only because she had been spending all her years wandering the deep valleys and adventuring to temper her Zither Heart that she had been relatively unknown. For an 18 year old to reach Large Success of her Zither Heart was rare throughout the entirety of the Zither Faction's history!

Ding ding ding!

The clear stream-like sound was like beads falling on a jade plate. Lin Ming had already experienced that sonic attack once before, he wasn't going to sit there like an idiot and suffer it again.

His powerful soul force penetrated into the air; the Concept of Wind began!

A soundwave attack was in the end a sound, and all of these zither melodies needed to be transmitted through air vibrations. Lin Ming was able to integrate his awareness into the wind, and by sensing the wind, he could subtly control all hidden dangers in the air.

In the moment that the sonic wave attacked, Lin Ming struck back, Flowers in the Storm!

Once the Concept of Wind was fused into the Heavy Profound Soft Spear, it was several times faster than before! Each and every note was accurately pierced to pieces by Lin Ming.

“Mm?”

The eyes of the elders that had been carefully observing the martial stage suddenly revealed an incredible look, as if they couldn't believe what they were seeing. A soundwave attack was invisible and formless. When most martial artists faced this sonic wave, they would do everything they could to draw as close to their opponent as possible and make it a close-range fight. If they could rush to their opponent's side, then they had basically won. After all, there were very few sound-based martial artists that were skilled in close-range combat.

If one only defended against the long-range attacks of a sound-based martial artist, then they were basically waiting to lose. This was because it was exceedingly difficult to detect the patterns of attack!

But now they saw Lin Ming on the martial stage, accurately crushing each note with a spear thrust without missing a single one. This left everyone staring, befuddled.

In particular, the female students of the Zither Faction had preposterous expressions, as if they had gone crazy. All of them were clear on just how strong Qin Wuxin was. Of course, Lin Ming wasn't weak. If Lin Ming was able to close in on Qin Wuxin and defeat her, they wouldn't have been surprised, But Lin Ming wasn't even thinking of closing in on her, instead constantly defending against Qin Wuxin's attacks.

They had been in the Zither Faction for so many years, and yet they had never seen a Zither Faction disciple's fight be like this.



What the hell was this Lin Ming? Was he a bat?

“Isn’t a sound wave invisible and formless? How is Lin Ming deflecting Qin Wuxin’s attacks?” An elder asked with an inconceivable tone.

“Concept of Wind!” Shi Zongtian said. “Those sound waves must pass through the wind. Lin Ming is able to capture every note through the Concept of Wind, and then quickly react. But to do this requires an extremely formidable soul force foundation. Currently out of all the disciples present, only Lin Ming can achieve this.”

Shi Zongtian was right, even Jiang Lanjian didn’t have this ability. Although he was also proficient in the Concept of Wind, his soul force was too lacking. He didn’t have the massive soul force and control needed to permeate it through the wind and perceive the feeling of the situation.

“Hm, but I’m confused, I wonder what this Lin Ming is thinking. Since he can block the sonic wave attacks, why doesn’t he rush over to Qin Wuxin?” An elder shook his head. He thought that since this was Lin Ming’s first time facing off against a martial artist from the Zither Faction, his experience was lacking and he probably hadn’t even thought of this point.

Shi Zongtian remained silent. He knew that Lin Ming was young, but it was wrong for anyone to think that he lacked combat experience. Lin Ming was able to instantly come up with a plan to

resist the zither music attacks by combining the Concept of Wind with his soul force; this clearly illustrated his inventiveness and adaptability.

If Lin Ming decided not to rush into close-range, he inevitably had other plans. But just what were these plans?

# Chapter 274 – Insight

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“Profound Wind Eight Melodies!”

Qin Wuxin’s delicate hands harshly gripped down on the strings, and a suddenly shrill and plaintive sound came from the zither, as if silk cloth was being torn part.

Eight unique zither melodies shot out at the same time. These melodies were not separate attacks, but rather harmoniously blended within each other, their sounds resonating and suppressing each other at the same time, reflecting endlessly. The complex melodies were constantly transforming, endlessly changing, filled with layer upon layer of murderous intent, invisible and without form!

This was Qin Wuxin’s first time using such an attack at the Total Faction Martial Meeting. Before this match, she had only used several sonic wave attacks to sufficiently defeat all of her enemies.

Profound Wind Eight Melodies!

The young girls of the Zither Faction saw Qin Wuxin display this technique, and all of them began to smolder with elation. This was one of the Zither Faction’s ultimate skills, the core cultivation method among all core cultivation methods!

Of course, they would never have the good fortune to learn a cultivation method of such rank. In fact, with their talent, it was useless for them to study this even if given to them. They would

simply be wasting their time.

The Profound Wind Eight Melodies was an offensive skill that the Zither Faction's Founder had found in some ancient ruins. This skill contained an incomparably formidable attack power, and now seeing Qin Wuxin use this ability, the young girls of the Zither Faction stared with wide eyes and opened ears, lest they miss even a single detail.

In their view, Qin Wuxin was the pinnacle of talent. The difficulty of using the power of the Profound Winds Eight Melodies was beyond their imagination. If the opponent was to storm them, they would have no chance to do so. But once used, this technique truly swept away all opposition.

“Even the Profound Wind Eight Melodies been used, Wuxin has really encountered a formidable opponent this time.” The Zither Faction's old woman's face was very somber. This little punk called Lin Ming was too difficult to deal with; he was able to completely understand the attack patterns of the invisible sonic waves. However, the Profound Wind Eight Melodies was ever-changing and contained abstract principles within. When she was young, she had defeated many masters and experts with the Profound Wind Eight Melodies.

‘Wuxin has already cultivated the Profound Wind Eight Melodies to 70% proficiency. I want to see just how this little punk will stop this!’ Thinking this, the old woman's cragged face revealed a coldly shrewd smile.

At this time, Lin Ming's heart was calm and tranquil. He had

already sensed through the Concept of Wind the eight murderous intents that were hidden in the air.

Although the Profound Wind Eight Melodies was incomparably enigmatic, its name still contained the word 'Wind'. As long as it had to pass through the air, Lin Ming was able to sense every change of the notes through the Concept of Wind.

At this moment, Lin Ming closed his eyes. Facing this all-encompassing sound attack, vision had already lost all meaning. Even his sense of hearing was useless, because once he heard the sounds of the zither melody, the attack would already have arrived.

Under the support of the ethereal martial intent, Lin Ming instantly entered into a deep state of concentration. A powerful soul force surged out in eight directions like a massive octopus.

At this time, Lin Ming had cut off all five of his senses, and he could no longer see or hear. But Lin Ming's soul force perception had risen to a terrifying degree. Every slight fluctuation in the surrounding atmosphere was completely under his control.

All eight of these melodies were meticulously grasped by Lin Ming.

First melody!

A slow vibration frequency, it was just like the low and deep

waves of the absolute ocean.

Second melody!

The vibration frequency was a bit faster, it was like the clarion song of birds.

Third melody!

A slight vibration, it was difficult to detect. It was like the sounds of insects chirping at night.

Fourth melody!

An intense vibration, like the terrifying sound of earthquakes and landslides!

.....

Eighth melody!

The frequency was fast, and the vibration was strong. It was like a silver vase being broken for the first time, it was like a knife cutting down on crystal clear ice.

These eight melodies were all different. They collided, resonated, reflected, supported, suppressed, endless variation!

If the frequency was different, then the power of vibration was different...

At this time, Lin Ming suddenly became aware. The power of vibration actually contained such a Law within!

Instantly, eight spears thrust out!

Each spear contained a different frequency and a different vibrating intensity of true essence. Each spear corresponded with a different melody!

Pah pah pah pah pah pah pah!

At the same time, the eight sounds appeared in the air. Every sound was light, as if it were a small firework fizzling away.

This was completely different from that sharp grating sound from the first impact.

What!?!?

The surrounding martial artists were astonished to the point of staring with slack-jawed expressions, especially those young girls of the Zither Faction who understood just how powerful the Profound Wind Eight Melodies truly was. They had an expression of absolute disbelief, they simply could not believe what Lin Ming

had done. If Lin Ming had simply destroyed all of Qin Wuxin's melodies, then they wouldn't be too surprised. After all, Lin Ming had defeated even Jiang Lanjian.

But now, Lin Ming had thrust out eight spears, and spotlessly nullified the Profound Wind Eight Melodies, this was just beyond the scope of their understanding.

The eight melodies had endless variations. It was a cultivation method that was found in an ancient ruin; how could it be so easy to decipher?

The one with the most intense and violent reaction was the Sovereign of the Zither Faction. The face of this 200 year old woman instantly changed on scene, and she immediately stood up.

“This is impossible!”

The Zither Faction Sovereign had extraordinary eyesight. A normal martial artist would only know that Lin Ming had solved the Profound Wind Eight Melodies, but didn't know the specific process. But, the Zither Faction Sovereign was able to clearly see this entire process!

Lin Ming had thrust out eight spears, and each spear contained a different implicit true essence. Each spear perfectly corresponded to all eight different melodies!

But even the Zither Faction Sovereign didn't know what



technique Lin Ming used so that his true essence was able to perfectly counterbalance the melodies without any sound flowing out at all. There was only a small grating sound; it was just like Qin Wuxin's zither music had disappeared into thin air.

“This little punk! In that split-second he was able to deduce the profound principles contained within the melody! This is obviously his first time encountering the Profound Wind Eight Melodies, so how could he possibly be aware of this! He broke my Zither Faction's core cultivation method, how is this possible!?!?” The Zither Faction Sovereign was simply unable to accept this truth. To her, the Profound Wind Eight Melodies was the highest cultivation method within the Zither Faction, and yet, it had been broken apart by a 16 year old boy in a single move. This was simply as if her own faith were collapsing before her.

Several surrounding elders saw the Zither Faction Sovereign's crazy reaction and didn't know why. They simply didn't understand the intricacies of the sonic waves and didn't know the mysteries of the vibrations.

“Sovereign Qin, what has caused you to lose your composure?” Shi Zongtian slowly asked.

The Zither Faction Sovereign's face sank like a stone in water. She clenched her teeth and sat down without replying. She didn't want to commend nor congratulate Lin Ming for his amazing perception – that was equal to slapping her Zither Faction in the face through another way.

Shi Zongtian faintly smiled. Although he didn't understand the

mysteries behind the music, he was able to guess that Lin Ming had caused Sovereign Qin to react in this manner. To cause this old bag to react so coarsely was not easy at all.

Things were becoming more and more interesting.

On the martial stage, Qin Wuxin had finally lost that light and ethereal temperament as if she were floating on wind. She had poured her true essence into that zither music, no one knew better than her just what happened a moment ago.

Lin Ming had thrust out his vibrating true essence with eight spears, and each spear contained a latent true essence vibration and frequency. These happened to collide with her melodies, causing both to mutually disappear!

How had he managed to achieve this?

Qin Wuxin felt her own eyelashes inadvertently trembling. She wanted to reach out and stroke her zither, but as her hands reached halfway she suddenly stopped. She found that Lin Ming was standing still, not noticing anything around him at all and dead to the world, as if he had entered some strange state.

Sudden enlightenment?

After some martial artist artists suddenly understood a Law, it was possible that they would enter into a state of sudden enlightenment. This state would last for several dozen breaths of

time, and during that time period, their own cultivation, soul force, and comprehension of Concepts would grow by leaps and bounds!

This extremely wonderful and marvelous state was beyond rare; it could only be discovered and not sought, one had to experience a moment of true serendipity. Many masters had reached the Xiantian realm or even the Revolving Core realm without ever having experienced a sudden enlightenment.

Qin Wuxin understood this state because she too had once experienced it. It was a lucky chance that she had slipped into this state while she was adventuring through the deep valleys to temper her Zither Heart. After sitting in meditation for three days and three nights, she had spontaneously entered into sudden enlightenment. After waking up, her Zither Heart had reached Large Success!

There were very few 18 year olds in the entire history of the Zither Faction that had reached Large Success of the Zither Heart. Otherwise, it would have been impossible for her to use the Profound Wind Eight Melodies.

Sudden enlightenment was a condition that all martial artists yearned for in their dreams. It could occur anywhere and anytime. But once one was interrupted, then this state would also end.

Qin Wuxin hesitated, and finally she withdrew her hand. She calmly waited for Lin Ming to complete his sudden enlightenment.

She sighed in her heart, and let out a long breath. This young man's lucky opportunities and talent could really make anyone mad with jealousy. He was strong to such a degree, and he also had amazing combat insight. Perhaps even Jiang Baoyun and Mugu Buyu would find it difficult to suppress a talent like this...

This time, Lin Ming's sudden enlightenment originated from his understanding of the Law of Vibrations. Sound was only one kind of vibration, but vibration was the source of all sound.

Zither Faction disciples were skilled and well versed in sound waves and their use, but that was only in sound. In terms of understanding vibration, they were far inferior to Lin Ming.

After cultivating Flow like Silk for such a long time, Lin Ming was able to faintly trace upon the source of all vibrations, this was the so-called Concept of Vibration. It was what Lin Ming had suddenly become aware of after being inspired by Qin Wuxin's Profound Wind Eight Melodies!

This understanding had allowed Lin Ming to have almost perfect control of the vibration of his true essence and the intensity of the frequency, causing the Profound Wind Eight Melodies to disappear. Those melodies had directly vanished, only leaving behind a small, dull, grating sound. Otherwise, it would have been like the first time that his spear had met Qin Wuxin's soundwave. The soundwave energy would erupt and cause a high-pitched grating sound.

“So that's how it is. When the vibration frequency is the same, but the direction is completely opposite, then the two vibrations

will cancel each other out without a trace left...”

“On the other hand, if the vibration frequencies are the same, and the direction is also the same, then the vibrations will superimpose upon each other, and become stronger...”

Lin Ming’s heart was speaking to itself. The vibrating true essence within his body began to shake as it started to split up, differentiating from each other. In that moment every vibrating true essence filament divided into two; 5000 filaments turned into 10,000!

“Huo!”

Lin Ming suddenly opened both his eyes. At this time, there seemed to be thunder flashing within his pupils!

In those trivial 10 breaths’ time of sudden enlightenment, Lin Ming’s soul force had soared to another level, and his true essence had substantially grown. His peak Bone Forging cultivation began to completely overflow! It started to independently flow into his own meridians!

Lin Ming’s meridians had long ago linked up by luck when he had absorbed the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. It was only because of Mu Qianyu’s warning that had given Lin Ming pause. The reason that Lin Ming had connected his meridians was because he had used the power of thunder, and was by no means through his own true essence. If he had broken through to the Pulse Condensation Period because of that, then his foundation

would have been shaky.

Therefore Lin Ming decided not to forcefully breakthrough, but instead wait until his Bone Forging true essence accumulated to the point where it would naturally overflow. When this happened, that true essence would spontaneously flow into his meridians and create the most solid of foundations.

Because he had been forcefully suppressing his true essence so that it didn't flow into his meridians, everyone, including Qin Ziya, hadn't noticed that Lin Ming's meridians had already linked up.

Now that his true essence was finally overflowing, all Lin Ming had to do was sit in meditation for an evening and consolidate his cultivation. At that point, he would officially enter into the early Pulse Condensation Period!

“This boy... it seems he made a breakthrough?” Shi Zongtian was startled. This was no trivial matter. Even within Divine Phoenix Island, it would be rare for a 16 year old to break through to the Pulse Condensation Period!

“Breakthrough? Humph. It's only Bone Forging true essence overflowing. The bottleneck between the Bone Forging stage and Pulse Condensation Period isn't too big or too small, but you still have to connect your meridians and open them, how could it be so quick?” The Zither Faction old woman curled her lips in disdain. There seemed to be more and more miracles happening with Lin Ming, making her increasingly unhappy.



# Chapter 275 – Pulse Condensation Breakthrough

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“Breakthrough? Humph. It’s only Bone Forging true essence overflowing. The bottleneck between the Bone Forging stage and Pulse Condensation Period isn’t too big or too small, but you still have to connect your meridians and open them, how could it be so quick?” The Zither Faction old woman curled her lips in disdain. There seemed to be more and more miracles happening with Lin Ming, making her increasingly unhappy.

The bottleneck between the Bone Forging stage and the Pulse Condensation Period was one that every martial artist would inevitably encounter. If their foundation was poor, then a martial artist would be mired at this bottleneck for several years, or even dozens of years. But if too long a time passed, then that also meant the end of their martial arts path.

To talents within a sect, breaking through to the Pulse Condensation Period wasn’t anything too difficult. For a breakthrough, it would take a few months; even half a year was extremely normal.

But young talents were always racing against the hands of time. To them, several months were an incomparably precious treasure.

The old woman of the Zither Faction was already furious with jealousy and anger at Lin Ming, especially since he had managed to break through their Zither Faction’s Profound Wind Eight Melodies.



Shi Zongtian felt his beard, not speaking. He also felt that it was impossible for Lin Ming to break through the Pulse Condensation Period so quickly. It was just that in that split second a moment ago, he had felt Lin Ming's true essence overflow into his meridians, but it was quickly contained by him.

“This boy, he's quite bold. He wants to make a full and complete breakthrough. After true essence overflows, that is a natural breakthrough, and using that as the basis creates the most solid foundation. Of course, it is also the most time consuming method.”

Even in the Seven Profound Valleys, there were very few geniuses that would opt to do this. If they did, it would delay them by a massive amount of time; the gains simply didn't equal the losses. Lin Ming came from a humble mortal background, it was already very commendable that he had such broad vision of his own path.

Shi Zongtian said, “Even if it's the Pulse Condensation bottleneck, at most it will take Lin Ming half a year. He'll definitely be able to smoothly break through to the Pulse Condensation Period while he is 16 years old. For a 16 and a half year old martial artist to break through to the Pulse Condensation Period... haha, the result is already quite good even in a fourth-grade sect.

“It's only ‘good’.” The Zither Faction Sovereign harshly bit out this word. “If this old bag of bones remembers, Sword Faction's Jiang Baoyun also reached the Pulse Condensation Period when he was 16 and a half years old, and my Zither Faction's Wuxin was only two months later than him at 16 years and 8 months. The

difference between them isn't much."

"Haha, Baoyun and Wuxin are both great talents." Shi Zongtian knew that this old woman cared much about face, was not magnanimous at all, and also had a short fuse. It was best to just agree with whatever she said.

Shi Zongtian's reason why he thought Lin Ming was valuable wasn't in his cultivation speed. For him to reach the peak Bone Forging stage at 16 years of age was also the standard for a medium sixth-grade talent; it simply couldn't be regarded as a monstrous genius. However, what he valued in Lin Ming was his perception, soul force talent, thunder origin energy fusion compatibility, and the mysterious true essence and body he had.

"Thank you for staying your hand."

Lin Ming said to Qin Wuxin as he bowed. His sudden enlightenment had lasted for ten breaths of time. During this time period, besides the natural true essence that protected his body, Lin Ming was completely undefended. If Qin Wuxin had seized this opportunity to use the Profound Wind Eight Melodies, then Lin Ming would have suffered serious damage.

Losing the match wouldn't have been too significant, but if he had been broken out of his sudden enlightenment and ruined his chances to enhance his cultivation and perception, then that loss would have been utterly disastrous.

Qin Wuxin calmly said, "You and I have neither hatred nor

enmity. Naturally, I would never do something so malicious and evil-hearted against you. Now that your sudden enlightenment has ended, let us bring this show to its finale.”

“Mm, okay!”

Lin Ming flourished the Heavy Profound Soft Spear. This time he was eagerly anticipating validating the new strength of Flow like Silk.

“Hah!”

10,000 vibrating true essence filaments began to tremble with excitement, even the Heavy Profound Soft Spear began to shake in his hand.

“Profound Wind Eight Melodies – Double Crescendo!”

Qin Wuxin’s hands touched the zither, her fingers furiously twisting the strings. A slowly building tempo began to gain traction and a double Profound Wind Eight Melodies began to howl in the wind. This was the first time that she had ever used this technique in true combat.

The first reason was that the double Profound Wind Eight Melodies consumed a great deal of true essence. The second reason was that if Qin Wuxin faced an opponent that tried to rush up by her side, it gave her very little time to save up the required true essence. As for those that couldn’t rush up to her, she didn’t need

the double Profound Wind Eight Melodies to deal with them.

As the zither melodies flowed forth, the entire martial stage filled with a myriad of sounds; the churning of wind, the songs of birds, the crushing waves of a tsunami, the rumbling sound of thunder...

Bass, tenor, low-pitch, high-pitch, all these sounds resounded and superimposed up each other, chaos without end!

Lin Ming shut both of his eyes; in the void, nothing could escape his perception.

“More than half of the sonic waves do not contain true essence! The Double Crescendo Profound Wind Eight Melodies has altogether 16 sound waves that contain murderous intent. As for the rest, none of them contain any attack power.”

A long spear swept out, 10,000 vibrating filaments of true essence howled forth!

Peng peng peng peng peng!

The beating of a cavalry, the cracking of a silver bottle!

Sounds erupted, arias ruptured, the martial stage's protective shield began to tremble!

This time Lin Ming did not use some wonderfully exquisite

technique, but used absolute brute force. Everything was swept away, his spear was like a dragon, unstoppable, irresistible, overwhelming!

A single spear crushed five sounds.

The second spear broke apart another four!

After 4 spears, all 16 sound waves that contained murderous intent were completely pierced by Lin Ming!

‘10,000 vibrating filaments of true essence, Flow like Silk is more than twice as powerful as before!’ Lin Ming was very shocked. These 10,000 filaments of true essence had just divided, and yet it was already powerful to this degree. If it was further increased, its power would be even greater!

In the memory of the Supreme Elder from the Realm of the Gods, Flow like Silk could split into millions, or even billions of filaments. If they were combined with the Eight Inner Hidden Gates and the Nine Stars of the Dao Palace, just what degree would its power reach?

Bang!

Lin Ming shattered every zither sound, his spear thrust straight towards Qin Wuxin’s neck!

The wind whistled and the azure true essence tore through the

atmosphere. Qin Wuxin could already feel an aching pain on her neck from the intense cold on the tip of the spear!

As the Heavy Profound Soft Spear contained the Concept of Wind, its speed had reached the extreme. Qin Wuxin didn't move, only watched as the long spear approached her.

Suddenly Lin Ming pulled back his strength and the spear suddenly stopped, the shaft still trembling and the azure true essence still flashing. The cold bright spearpoint was less than half an inch from Qin Wuxin's slender jade-like neck!

The cold spear light and delicate skin, the aura of chilling slaughter suddenly formed a sharp contrast against the peerless beauty of an amazing woman. With such strength in sharp opposition to a gently soft charm, it created a remarkable image.

Lin Ming gripped the shaft of the Heavy Profound Soft Spear, his heart somewhat surprised. Although he was confident that Qin Wuxin could not dodge this spear, he hadn't expected that she would remain completely motionless.

"You won't evade?"

"Since I cannot evade, then why evade?" Qin Wuxin had restored her precious tranquil expression. Facing the wantonly cold spear light, she didn't even bat an eye.

Even if she was the first ranked disciple of the Zither Faction, Qin

Wuxin was still poor at close combat. Once someone was able to close in on her, that basically meant that she lost. Qin Wuxin had no way to use a melee weapon.

Lin Ming retrieved his long spear, and couldn't help but exclaim in admiration, "Lady Qin has superb bearing, I apologize for offending you."

Qin Wuxin tossed her long sleeves and picked up her zither. Over these years, Qin Wuxin had never placed her zither within her spatial ring; this was similar to how the Sword Faction carried their swords on their backs, and was an equally good approach to increasing her awareness of her zither's feelings.

"Lin Ming, victory!"

With the announcement from the referee elder, the audience couldn't help but lament in silence. Lin Ming was simply too strong. Even Qin Wuxin who had reached Large Success of her Zither Heart had lost. Except Jiang Baoyun, Mugu Buyu, and Ouyang Ming, there was nobody that could contend with his strength!

At this time, the gambling house had already increased Lin Ming's odds to 1:6; this was the same as Ouyang Ming!

Lin Ming didn't care much about this. He returned to the contestant waiting area and chose a quiet corner where he placed a sound insulating barrier.

“Xingxuan, come over to me.” Lin Ming beckoned to Qin Xingxuan in the audience with a true essence sound transmission. As the boy and girl became increasingly familiar with each other, Lin Ming no longer called Qin Xingxuan Miss Qin.

“Mm, okay.”

Qin Xingxuan was in a very good mood as she walked over. Lin Ming’s winning streak hadn’t surprised her, what had surprised her was that during every match, Lin Ming would also show a new and unexpected ability that was beyond her expectations.

In fact, Lin Ming hadn’t achieved a landslide victory against Qin Wuxin or Jiang Lanjian. However, as these strange and mysterious abilities surfaced during each match, Lin Ming’s momentum increased until it rivaled someone like Ouyang Ming.

“Xingxuan, can you help guard me, I need to meditate for a moment and cultivate.”

After the ninth round had ended, it was time for lunch so there was a full two hour relaxation time. Lin Ming had obtained many insights and he wanted to fully absorb them as soon as possible. At the same time, his Bone Forging stage true essence was constantly overflowing, and there was an anxious feeling like it would explode from his bones.

Lin Ming had been forcefully suppressing this true essence and felt very itchy and a bit aching like all his bones were swelling. He wanted to break through to the Pulse Condensation Period



immediately.

“Guard you?” You want...” Qin Xingxuan was surprised, she didn’t know what Lin Ming was going to do.

“I’m going to break through to the Pulse Condensation Period!” Lin Ming calmly said. Not too long ago, breaking through to Pulse Condensation had been his lifelong pursuit, but now he had arrived at this step at only 16 years of age. Not only that, but he had made a perfect breakthrough where his true essence had autonomously overflowed! But as this grand moment arrived, he still remained completely tranquil. This was because he had personally experienced the talent of someone like Mu Qianyu, and he knew that a little Pulse Condensation Period was nothing at all!

“Break through to the Pulse Condensation Period?” Qin Xingxuan was shocked, “You... your meridians have already connected?”

“Mm!”

Lin Ming nodded, not wasting any time. Although this rest period was long, it still wasn’t too much time, and he also knew that the inspirations he received were fleeting. He didn’t even have enough time to find a quiet room, instead just placing some cloth up to keep out the sound and then sitting down to meditate and revolve his true essence.

Under the guidance of the ethereal martial intent, Lin Ming soon entered an empty state of mind. Despite all of the chaos around him, he was unaffected by any of it. True essence broke through

from his bones, his body was like a floodgate that was opening, and all of the true essence poured through and endlessly surged into his meridians!

“This boy...” In the Grand Hall above the square, Shi Zongtian had been paying close attention to Lin Ming. He saw as Lin Ming walked over to a quiet corner and then sat down in mediation to revolve his true essence, he was suddenly startled. True essence had broken out of his bones and flowed into his meridians... this was clearly breaking through to the Pulse Condensation Period!

“This is the Pulse Condensation Period! He broke through so quickly... his meridians must have already been linked up, it was just that he had been suppressing his true essence, and wanted to wait for his Bone Forging true essence to overflow.”

Shi Zongtian had amazing eyesight; he had already seen through Lin Ming's condition.

The wrinkled expression of the Zither Faction's old woman suddenly became extremely ugly. Just a moment ago she had absolutely asserted that it was impossible that Lin Ming had broken through to the Pulse Condensation Period, but in less than half an incense stick of time, Lin Ming had actually sat down and began to meditate through his breakthrough. This was simply slapping her in the face!

“He just reached 16 years of age and is already at the Pulse Condensation Period... throughout the last several hundred years of the Seven Profound Valleys, he was the only one to do so! Even if he were placed within Divine Phoenix Island or some other fourth-

grade sect, this would be a top line talent!” The Sword Faction’s Great Elder was incomparably surprised.

“This boy’s future is limitless!”

“Haha, with Jiang Lanjian and this boy, my Seven Profound Valleys will enter into a prosperous age!”

As the surrounding elders discussed and their appraisal of Lin Ming rose higher, the Zither Faction Sovereign’s expression became all the more ugly.

At this moment, Shi Zongtian suddenly said, “No, something seems... this boy... has he comprehended a martial intent!?!?”

# Chapter 276 – Tempering Marrow Realm

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“Martial intent?”

With these two words from Shi Zongtian, all of the elders present were shocked. As they looked carefully, they saw that Lin Ming really had entered into a strange state, as if everything around him had no influence on him at all. This state was consistent to the supplementary martial intents that were described in the ancient texts.

A martial intent was something that could only be discovered, and couldn't be sought. One could only comprehend one through their own lucky destiny, and this had absolutely nothing at all to do with a martial artist's talent. It could even appear in the body of an ordinary person, or it could even appear in a completely wasted body.

Geniuses could be filtered and raised through generations by breeding, but a martial intent could not. In fact, in the countless talents of the Seven Profound Valleys' younger generation, there still wasn't a single person that had managed to comprehend a martial intent.

“He actually comprehended a martial intent... this fellow has such dog-sh\*t luck! There must be smoke rising from his ancestors' graves!” The Zither Faction's old woman clenched her teeth like a rabid dog, glaring at Lin Ming with her eyes and chest rising and falling like a frog. She was angry to the point that she couldn't speak. This country bumpkin boy from the 36 countries had actually defeated her most beloved disciple and had broken her

Zither Faction's core cultivation method, the Profound Winds Eight Melodies.

And what was most irritating was that this fellow had actually made a breakthrough in the middle of battle, and now even showed a martial intent; all of this was madly slapping her in the face over and over again. She felt that the Zither Faction had only served to show Lin Ming's superb qualities in contrast; how could someone arrogant like her even take this?

Shi Zongtian didn't care about the Zither Faction Sovereign's reaction, he only looked towards Mu Qinghong with some worry in his eyes. Shi Zongtian's mood was extremely contradictory at the moment. While he wanted Lin Ming to become better and better, he also feared that Divine Phoenix Island came here to plunder their talent. It could be said that he was struggling with the positives and negatives.

Mu Qinghong smiled but didn't say anything. She already knew that Lin Ming had connected all of his meridians so that he wouldn't have a bottleneck from the Bone Forging state to the Pulse Condensation period. But, she hadn't expected that his breakthrough would occur so quickly.

"He reached Pulse Condensation just after reaching 16 years of age. Compared to Qianyu, he's slower by about eight months. Still, this extreme speed is already very rare, I cannot imagine what sort of future this child will have."

Mu Qinghong's heart was filled with anticipation. Mu Qianyu was a fire-attribute talent, Mu Bingyun was an ice-attribute talent,

and with the thunder-attribute talent Lin Ming, that would be three peerless talents. In the future, they would become powerhouses that would be able to change the entire situation in the South Horizon Region, and maybe even deter that titan hiding within the South Sea.

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As the ninth round ended, the afternoon lunchtime finally came, and Lin Ming was still sitting in meditation, immersed in the ethereal martial intent as he was before. Of course, Qin Xingxuan hadn't gone out for lunch. A martial artist could easily skip a few meals, and even going for several days without sleep wouldn't affect them too much.

Jiang Baoyun hadn't left. Instead, he polished his treasure sword as he casually sat in a chair at the contestant waiting area, gazing at Lin Ming from afar.

"Pulse Condensation period..." Jiang Lanjian murmured as he sat near Jiang Baoyun.

"Mm..." Jiang Baoyun nodded. For a genius martial artist, it was easy to use the pressure of a true battle in order to break through. This was also the reason that so many martial artists had come to the Total Faction Martial Meeting.

"Things are becoming more and more interesting. I thought that Lin Ming would just have me be a little serious, but now..." As Jiang Baoyun said this, his two bright eyes flashed with a thick

fighting spirit.

“You think that he might defeat you?”

“I can’t say!”

Jiang Lanjian was surprised. In his experience, Jiang Baoyun had always been a very arrogant man who had a very high view; there were very few peers that he considered his opponents. But now it seemed he had a high opinion of Lin Ming.

Jiang Lanjian said, “I’ve fought against him. Although I’m not his match, I was still able to face him. My Concept of Wind was able to wound him. But against you, my Concept of Wind doesn’t work at all, I can’t even touch the hem of your robe...”

“Haha, sometimes these disparities can’t be so easily explained. Haven’t you seen that after he fought Qin Wuxin, his strength has been constantly growing?”

“I’ve noticed but... I don’t think the progress he’s made will be able to cover the gap between you two. Even though he broke through to the Pulse Condensation realm, he just recently broke through, the amount of strength he’s gained is limited.”

“Just wait and we’ll be able to see. If there isn’t an accident, Lin Ming will definitely face Mugu Buyu before me. Mugu Buyu’s strength cannot be underestimated. That fellow’s attacks are strange and peculiar. Even if it’s me, I can’t guarantee that I will be

able to defeat him! After Lin Ming and Mugu Buyu fight each other, I'll be able to see just where the limits of his strength are.”

As time passed, Lin Ming's breakthrough gradually entered into the critical period. True essence flowed from the body into the organs, from the organs into the bones, and from the bones into the meridians, where it began to revolve through every inch of flesh, making a full revolution and nurturing the body before returning to the organs and muscles, completing a full circle.

As true essence flowed into the meridians, it created a circulation that revolved within the body. This was the greatest difference between the Pulse Condensation period and the Bone Forging stage. If true essence flowed into the organs and bones, it was just like a carriage running into shallow seas and swamps: it would just be mired there. However, if true essence penetrated the meridians and flowed there, it was like a fast racing horse on a spacious main road. There was simply no comparison between them.

After this circulation continued on for several revolutions, Lin Ming felt heart suddenly still.

“Mm? This is...”

In that instant, Lin Ming could clearly feel a microscopic amount of true essence seep into the deepest part of his bones, fusing into his marrow.

True essence Tempering Marrow!



Lin Ming was jubilant with happiness!

The ‘Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians’ was a top Body Transformation cultivation method that had been passed down the Realm of the Gods and contained the accumulated knowledge of over a billion years. Although this cultivation method couldn’t be considered incomparably precious within the Realm of the Gods, in terms of the Body Transformation stage, it was the most perfect and complete method, and the highest level cultivation method that existed. There was nothing better!

Sky Spill Continent’s Body Transformation cultivation methods only contained six stages. Above the sixth Pulse Condensation stage were the Essence Gathering stages, which included the Houtian realm and the Xiantian realm. This was already a separate branch of cultivation from Body Transformation, instead turning towards true essence cultivation and soul cultivation.

However, the ‘Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians’ contained additional stages above Pulse Condensation. This included Tempering Marrow, where true essence entered the marrow, and after that was opening the Eight Inner Hidden Gates and the Nine Stars of the Dao Palace. After one accomplished this, their fist could shatter the sky, their feet would crack the world, and their roars would have the strength of heavenly tribulation. With just a single all-out attack, they could collapse moons and sink stars!

Even though the memories contained such exaggerates descriptions, Lin Ming still believed in them. However, he had always been a bit worried subconsciously.

He worried whether or not he could achieve the Tempering Marrow realm that was above the Pulse Condensation Period, or whether the ‘Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians’ that he cultivated had flaws. After all, the human bodies of those that lived in the Realm of the Gods might be different from those that live in Sky Spill Continent; what if he was unable to reach the Tempering Marrow realm?

And now, after Lin Ming had just stepped into the Pulse Condensation period, he had finally felt a tiny bit of true essence enter into his marrow, how could he not be excited about this?

If he could open the Eight Inner Hidden Gates and the Nine Stars of the Dao Palace, even if Lin Ming abandoned stepping into the Houtian realm and Xiantian realm, with just the cultivation of Body Transformation he could still become a supreme powerhouse of his generation.

After this tiny trace of true essence, Lin Ming continually attempted to push the true essence into the Tempering Marrow boundary. However, despite any actions he took to stimulate his true essence, it remained just above the bone and would not enter the marrow.

Until the end, his true essence overflow had finally ended, and he had only managed to push a tiny, insignificant amount of true essence into his marrow.

Lin Ming sighed and shook his head, “It seems like it must be done as recorded in the ‘Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians’. I’ll need to use top quality pills in order to wash the muscles and

cleanse the marrow, and I'll have to remove the foul Houtian air. I don't know how hard this might be, but it might be more difficult than even stepping into the Houtian or Xiantian realm...

“Top quality pills... I'll need many of these top quality pills. What sort of pills could be called top quality by a Supreme Elder of the Realm of the Gods? Is a Heaven Opening Pill sufficient?”

Lin Ming lacked confidence that he could find a reasonable path. Even if he immediately became a core disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys, a pill at the rank of the Heaven Opening Pill wasn't some joke. Its value was incalculable and it wasn't something that could be sold anywhere.

“Well, if I can win the Martial Meeting and become the champion, I will be able to obtain a future promise of a Heaven Opening Pill. However, I'll need to be at the peak Houtian realm before it can be honored. I'll have to figure out some way to get it ahead of time, otherwise I don't know how long it will take me to reach the peak Houtian realm...”

Thinking this, Lin Ming finally opened his eyes. He had officially stepped into the Pulse Condensation period.

“Lin Ming, you really broke through.” Qin Xingxuan smiled. She had been constantly guarding him by his side, and hadn't even moved a tiny step away. Naturally, she could not let anyone disturb Lin Ming during such a critical time period. This feeling of being trusted so completely by Lin Ming... Qin Xingxuan found that it was extremely to her liking.

“I just broke through and my cultivation hasn’t consolidated. My strength probably hasn’t increased by much.” As Lin Ming said this, he inadvertently glimpsed Jiang Baoyun staring at him from some distance away. Jiang Baoyun smiled and nodded his head, greeting him.

Lin Ming also returned a smile in return. He thought in his heart, ‘This Jiang Baoyun’s eyesight is just like a sharp sword, it’s as if he completely saw through me. Although he can’t understand my strength, he’s able to roughly approximate just how strong I am. For him to look at me with such confidence, it seems that I can’t underestimate him.’

At this time, the afternoon lunch break finally ended, and the contestants were beginning to file back into the arena. Most of the people that entered glanced at Lin Ming, their eyes contained envy, awe, fear, admiration, and even resentment.

Lin Ming had already been very strong, but now he was even stronger and more abnormal.

As the afternoon matches finally started, as of this moment, the only contestants left with complete victories were Lin Ming, Huo Yanluo, Mugu Buyu, Ouyang Ming, and Jiang Baoyun. The fights were becoming extremely heated, and the collisions of masters became more and more frequent. Even powerhouses like Jiang Lanjian and Qin Wuxin were showing up often.

During the tenth round, fifth match, Huan Xiaodie fought

against Huo Yanluo. Huang Xiaodie used all her attack styles and created countless illusions. However, Huo Yanluo was able to hang on and stimulate his true essence, finally summoning the Flame Essence within himself to defend and then attack.

The medium-grade human-step Flame Essence formed a ring of molten rocks around Huo Yanluo; all of the illusions and phantoms were completely melted away by the Abyssal Flame!

As Huo Yanluo approached step by step, all of Huan Xiaodie's moves were nullified. Finally, she was defeated.

The audience sent out waves of acclamation, especially the disciples of the Refiner Faction, they were simply mad with excitement.

“Haha, Elder Senior-apprentice Brother is too fierce, he won again! It seems our Refiner Faction can really hope to reach the top five this time!”

“Of course, our Elder Senior-apprentice Brother is one of the five contestants left with complete victories. If you look at the other four people, Jiang Baoyun and Mugu Buyu are without a doubt freaks at a different level. Lin Ming and Ouyang Ming are also two absolute farm animals, but our Elder Senior-apprentice Brother isn't much weaker than them. With the medium-grade human-step Flame Essence in his hand, who can stop him?”

The Refiner Faction disciples spoke with great enthusiasm. At their side, a young Zither Faction girl was not happy. “What do

you mean? If our Senior-apprentice Sister hadn't encountered some abnormal fellow, then she would absolutely still have complete victories now. Are you saying that our Senior-apprentice Sister is weaker than your Huo Yanluo?"

## Chapter 277 – Against The Fire Dragon

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The Refiner Faction disciples spoke with great enthusiasm. At their side, a young Zither Faction girl was not happy. “What do you mean? If our Senior-apprentice Sister hadn’t encountered some abnormal fellow, then she would absolutely still have complete victories now. Are you saying that our Senior-apprentice Sister is weaker than your Huo Yanluo?”

“Hehe, we’re not saying that.” The several Refiner Faction disciples lewdly smiled, their eyes involuntarily scanning up and down the body of the young Zither Faction girl’s body.

The Refiner Faction disciples were almost all men. It was because in the mortal world, their refining occupation would be equivalent to a blacksmith. There were very few women that were willing to withstand striking iron for hours on end and endure the harsh conditions. These young men almost never saw women, and now they witnessed rows upon rows of beautiful Zither Faction girls here, it was simply an intense visual shock. They couldn’t help but salivate and continue gulping over and over.

The Zither Faction girl was disgusted as she saw these vulgar young men. She icily said, “Just you wait. Sooner or later your Senior-apprentice Brother Huo will have to battle with our Senior-apprentice Sister Qin. Then you’ll be able to see just how fierce the Profound Wind Eight Melodies is.”

“Haha, the Profound Wind Eight Melodies only sounds scary. This morning, wasn’t it that bumpkin Lin Ming from the 36 countries that broke through that technique in a single attempt?

Our Senior-apprentice Brother Huo has a medium-grade human-step Flame Essence in his control, who can break something like that? Let alone Lin Ming, even if it were Jiang Baoyun or Mugu Buyu, if they ran into our Senior-apprentice Brother's Flame Essence, they would still have to retreat!"

"Aren't you afraid of the wind cutting your worthlessly flapping tongue? According to your own words, do you actually think your Senior-apprentice Brother Huo can take first place?"

"I didn't say for sure that he will take number one, I only said that no one can block Senior-apprentice Brother's Flame Essence. At most, they can only evade it. A medium-grade human-step Flame Essence is a power that a Pulse Condensation martial artist just can't resist." The Refiner Faction disciple's words were thick with a refined sense of superiority.

He condescendingly waved and continued, "You're not a Refiner Faction disciple so you have no idea what significance a Flame Essence has! Your Senior-apprentice Sister Qin losing to Lin Ming is a undeniable fact, and our Senior-apprentice Brother Huo keeping his winning streak is also an undeniable fact. Even if he meets Ouyang Ming or Lin Ming, Senior-apprentice Brother Huo can still fight! Once he takes out the Flame Essence, he has at least a 50-50 chance of winning! If he went up against your Senior-apprentice Sister Qin, then... hehe, I'm afraid that all of her clothes would be burnt off by fire!"

"You... shameless hooligan!" The Zither Faction girl glared angrily at the Refiner Faction boys.



“Hehe, us brothers are good enough, would you like to try us?”

The disciples of both sides argued, their dispute growing more and more fierce. The Refiner Faction disciples had extremely salacious expressions. Although they couldn't eat these beautiful women in front of them, they could at least take liberties and sexually harass them. As for the young girl of the Zither Faction, her face was filled with utter loathing.

At this moment, the referee announced, “Eleventh round, first match. Lin Ming against Huo Yanluo!”

Hearing this, the Refiner Faction disciple seemed a bit muddled. The Zither Faction girl's eyes immediately brightened. She had been hoping that Huo Yanluo would hurry up and fight with Qin Wuxin so that she could show this Refiner Faction disciple just who was better. But although it wasn't Qin Wuxin, going up against Lin Ming was also good.

“Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, you can do it! I'm cheering for you!”

“Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, kill that bastard Huo in a second!”

“Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, we love you!”

In the audience, the young female disciples of the Zither Faction were cheering for Lin Ming, their sweet voices crisp and clear.

Maybe because it was the influence of their well-groomed temperament, but their cheering began to find an identical rhythm, and soon their cheers were loud enough to shock everyone around them, and attract the attention of the entire audience.

Lin Ming was also flabbergasted. He looked at that crowd of extremely beautiful girls that were cheering for him, and his expression turned a little strange as he traced his nose.

“I don’t think I know them...”

Lin Ming had already been in many matches. Because this was the home stage of the Seven Profound Valleys, the so-called ‘cheers’ that Lin Ming had received so far were jeers and heckling from the crowd. But now, for the first time, there were actually people unexpectedly cheering for him. Not only that, but it was a rabid mass of frantic young girls, this caused Lin Ming to not really be able to enjoy his first fans here.

In the audience, Qin Xingxuan looked at the crowd of young Zither Faction girls with a bit of confusion and puzzlement. But then, this puzzlement immediately switched to a wary vigilance.

Although Qin Xingxuan’s natural temperament was tranquil and calm, she was still a young girl and had the sensitivities of a young girl. She quickly realized that at the end of this tournament, Lin Ming was destined to join the Seven Profound Valleys. But as for herself, she might need to wait several years before she could join. Thinking of the beautiful girls of the Zither Faction and Mirage Faction, Qin Xingxuan felt a sudden sinking sense of crisis in her

heart. If such a group of Linmaniacs had developed in only several days, then she had no idea what would happen in the future.

As the young girls of the Zither Faction cheered for Lin Ming, the Refiner Faction disciples naturally wouldn't let themselves be outdone.

“Senior-apprentice Brother Huo, we believe in you!”

“Senior-apprentice Brother Huo, wreck him!”

The two sides' cheers were in sharp opposition of each other. On the martial stage, Huo Yanluo didn't have complete assurance that he would win, Lin Ming's strength had been evident for anyone to see. But as long as he had the Flame Essence in his hand, Huo Yanluo also had faith he could fight on even terms.

“You are very strong. Before this Martial Meeting began, I never would have imagined you would come this far. You defeated Fang Qi, Jiang Lanjian, and Qin Wuxin one after another. But don't think that defeating them means that you've defeated me! The way that I fight is completely different!” As Huo Yanluo said this, he took out an exaggeratedly large red sword from his spatial ring. He hadn't even poured true essence into it, and yet a scorching heat wave blew out, as if he were holding onto a burning red-hot iron rod.

“Words are meaningless, let's fight!” Lin Ming took out his Heavy Profound Soft Spear, and a surge of momentum flowed out with it.

“Match, start!”

With the referee’s announcement, Huo Yanluo stimulated all of the true essence in his body. The high-grade human-step treasure sword in his hand kindled with brilliant Abyssal Flames!

This treasure sword was called the Abyss Blade. It was crafted after Huo Yanluo had obtained a Flame Essence, and personally tailored towards his strengths by a Refiner Faction elder. A massive amount of precious and rare materials had been used in its production, so much that its soaring cost equaled that of a normal earth-step treasure. It was only because there had been excessive care in trying to increase the power of fire origin energy within the blade that caused a minor impact on its quality so that it ultimately failed to become an earth-step treasure. However, it was still a top-ranked treasure among all high-grade human-step treasures.

With the Abyss Blade in hand, the Abyssal Flames burned even brighter. Layers of heat waves spread out, and soon even the tiles on the stage began to melt away.

“Ardent Flames Burning City!”

Huo Yanluo gave a loud cry, and the red Abyss Blade transformed into a roaring dragon. It rushed straight towards Lin Ming with a nearly unstoppable momentum!

As the Flame Essence was displayed on stage, the disciples of the Refiner Faction cheered out with all their strength. With the Flame

Essence in his control and combined with the Abyss Blade's increased fire power, even Mugu Buyu or Ouyang Ming had to dodge this attack of Huo Yanluo!

Lin Ming saw this fire dragon rushing towards him and slightly hesitated. With this slight hesitation, the fire dragon had already come directly in front of Lin Ming!

Lin Ming revolved the true essence within his body and poured azure true essence into his long spear, he stabbed out at the Abyssal Flames!

10,000 vibrating true essence filaments howled into the fire dragon. Everyone that saw this scene was shocked beyond measure!

He took it head-on?

Nobody believed that Huo Yanluo could become the champion, and very few believed he would even reach the top three. But nobody doubted the power of the Flame Essence, especially under the increased range of strength from the Abyss Blade!

Even darksteel would instantly melt under this high temperature. If a normal treasure lost its true essence protection, it would be reduced to slag under the Abyssal Flame!

To most people, even if Jiang Baoyun was facing Huo Yanluo, he would still have to avoid the Abyssal Flames and use his quick

speed and sword to attack Huo Yanluo, winning with a single strike.

And yet Lin Ming actually met this attack head-on?

The young girl from the Zither Faction covered her mouth in alarm. As for the Refiner Faction disciple, his expression was filled with excitement, waiting for Lin Ming to lose.

In that split-second, it was too late for anyone in the audience to respond. Lin Ming's spear had already inserted itself into the flame dragon's gaping maw; azure true essence thundered forth!

Huo Yanluo's lips curved up in a fierce grin. The reason he hadn't had confidence he could defeat Lin Ming was because of his erratic and evasive movements, and that spear of his that contained the Concept of Wind. He feared that Lin Ming would simply avoid his Abyssal Flames and attack him directly.

But in terms of a head-to-head attack, Huo Yanluo had complete faith in his abilities. He galvanized all of the true essence in his body, and the power of blazing hot fire poured out into the Heavy Profound Soft Spear, shooting towards Lin Ming along the spear shaft!

The power of fire was tyrannical and cruel, once it impacted into Lin Ming, it would ruin his meridians.

But at this time, Lin Ming's entire body erupted with an immense

amount of true essence. The Heretical God Seed began to let out cries of excitement. An enormous coercive power came crashing down, imprisoning the power of fire that had broken into Lin Ming's body!

Then, an irresistible suction force gushed out of the Heretical God Seed, directly pulling in the power of fire, using it to nourish the weak Flame Essence that hid within the Heretical God Seed.

In terms of grade, Lin Ming's own Flame Essence was barely enough to be called the lowest and weakest of all low-grade human-step Flame Essences. And this was only achieved after absorbing Huo Gong's Hollow Flame Essence.

But Huo Yanluo's own bodily Flame Essence was a true medium-grade human-step Abyssal Flame. Generally speaking, the flames that a Flame Essence released were a single grade higher than the Flame Essence itself. For instance, Huo Yanluo's Abyssal Flame released flames that were at the high-grade human-step level. In addition to the increased range of power from Abyss Blade, the strength of this flame had already reached the top-tier among all high-grade human-step flames.

This top-tier high-grade human-step flame was without a doubt great nourishment for the Flame Essence within the Heretical God Seed!

The tiny Flame Essence within the Heretical God Seed began to greedily devour the power of fire, slowly growing.

As the audience watched the scene on stage, all of them were dumbfounded. Lin Ming stood there in a lunging stance, his Heavy Profound Soft Spear thrust straight into the thick pillar of flame that was the fire dragon's maw. No matter how much Huo Yanluo urged his flames to grow and burn, Lin Ming hadn't even drawn back a single step!

Under the smoldering flames, even the tiles under Lin Ming's feet began to melt. An azure true essence protective shield guarded Lin Ming's body. No matter how much the snakes of fire raged throughout the barrier of azure true essence, that barrier showed not even a single sign of melting.

This scene was just like a mighty sea god stabbing a trident into a fiery dragon! No matter how much the fiery dragon struggled, it couldn't escape from the control of the sea god!

This aura caused everyone's hearts to quiver!

“Impossible, this is impossible!! How is this possible!?”

No one was more shocked than the disciples of the Refiner Faction. The Abyssal Flame was a medium-grade human-step Flame Essence – it was something that only a peak Houtian realm master could absorb! And now that the Flame Essence had the support of the Abyss Blade, if one wished to resist it, they could only do so with a higher cultivation. They would at least need to be at the extreme Houtian realm!

Although all of these geniuses were truly formidable, no one



thought that their strength could reach the extreme Houtian realm, not even Jiang Baoyun!

Most of these so-called geniuses could at best compare with a middle Houtian master, and that was only the weakest middle Houtian master of the 36 countries.

## Chapter 278 – The Outcome Is Clear

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The power of fire was continually being absorbed by the Heretical God Seed. The azure true essence within Lin Ming's body was kindled; the power of flame that flowed through his meridians created a very strong painfully burning sensation. However, it was only a burning pain. With the endlessly growing azure true essence protecting his meridians, they were incomparably tenacious, to the point where the power of fire couldn't damage them at all.

At first, Lin Ming had absorbed the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder with the help of Mu Qianyu and the Magnetic Birthstone. However, that was a low-grade earth-step Thunder Soul. In the face of this medium-grade human-step Flame Essence, Lin Ming was completely able to independently deal with it.

Of course, Lin Ming was only planning on absorbing a little bit of the Abyssal Flames. There was no way that Lin Ming would actually try to take the Flame Essence within Huo Yanluo's body, that was equal to creating a deadly blood feud with the Seven Profound Valleys' Refiner Faction. Even if he had the backing of Mu Qinghong, there was no way he would do something so malicious and stupid.

Flame Essences were eternal, never extinguishing. Even if Lin Ming pulled out a large amount of the power of fire, a Flame Essence would only need a bit of supplemental material and energy in order to restore to its peak condition. The Seven Profound Valleys had accumulated countless resources from plundering the nearby lands, so using some materials to nourish a Flame Essence was just a drop in the proverbial bucket.

After ten breaths of time, Lin Ming's spear was still stabbed into the Abyssal Flame's fire dragon, he hadn't even taken a single step back. During this time period, Huo Yanluo had gone all out and dumped as much true essence as he could into his Flame Essence. He had even used all of his power that was born from desperation, but none of it was able to move Lin Ming even a bit!

Huo Yanluo's complexion became increasingly ugly. He was simply unable to accept that this was happening to him. Although he acknowledged that he had a high chance of losing to Lin Ming, he thought that Lin Ming would rely on his speed to avoid the Abyssal Flames, and then close in on him to defeat him with a spear.

He could barely accept that result. After all, Huo Yanluo understood that without the Flame Essence, his own individual strength wasn't any better than Fang Qi's.

However, he never thought that in the face of his Flame Essence, Lin Ming wouldn't dodge or evade, instead he just used his long spear to block. Not only that, but he had already blocked for over ten breaths of time!

Huo Yanluo poured his true essence into the Flame Essence as if he had unlimited amounts. After a while, he had already consumed 40% of his true essence, but Lin Ming still appeared like a mountain, unshakeable and immovable!

'This is impossible! This is a medium-grade human-step Abyssal

Flame! My fire origin energy is at a sixth-grade fusion! I used a massive amount of Glacial Ice Divine Spring waters, and rested on a Polar Jade Bed, and even then I was just barely able to absorb this Flame Essence with my father's help, and yet this fellow is blocking it with his spear!

Huo Yanluo's heart was filled with a sense of fading decline. It was just like a checkers master playing chess against a chess master. The checkers master would eventually lose to the chess master in a disastrous defeat, and even the game was lost!

What could be more damaging to his self-confidence then this?

At the Grand Hall, the Refiner Faction Sovereign Huo Xuan had an extremely ugly complexion. Huo Yanluo was his son, and also an outstanding natural talent. It could be said that he hadn't hesitated at all to dump all the resources he could into his child.

With the investment of so many resources, he had expected Huo Yanluo to shine like a rising star at this Total Faction Martial Meeting. He hadn't expected that in front of Lin Ming, his son would just be like a child facing an adult, unable to muster any power to resist.

"Lin Ming's body... there's something special about it?" Shi Zongtian felt that as power of fire from the Abyssal Flame continually flowed into Lin Ming's body, it disappeared without a trace, as if it had gone into another dimension. Was this because of his azure true essence?

As he spoke, he couldn't help but glance at Mu Qinghong to see if he could glean anything from her expression. In Shi Zongtian's mind, Mu Qinghong had a much more thorough understanding of Lin Ming than he did.

However, he found that Mu Qinghong's expression was a bit incredible – it seemed that she was also puzzled by this scene on the martial stage.

Shi Zongtian's heart suddenly felt balanced and better.

“Huoo — !”

At this moment onstage, Huo Yanluo finally stopped his ludicrous attack. He cut off his true essence, and the Abyssal Flames immediately extinguished.

At this time, all of the tiles under Lin Ming's feet had melted into a dark red magma, except for the parts that had been protected by his true essence.

“I... I admit defeat!”

Huo Yanluo clenched his teeth and he slowly spat out these words. In the Seven Profound Valleys, all of the direct disciples had a haughty pride bred into their bones, it was their way of living. And yet, Huo Lanyuo had lost this match just too miserably. It was hard for him to immediately accept defeat.

“Well fought.”

Lin Ming examined himself. The Heretical God Seed's Flame Essence hadn't grown by much. Although the Abyssal Flame's grade was very high, in the end it was just the power of fire, it had a limited effect on raising a Flame Essence.

However, the reason that Lin Ming chose to confront the Abyssal Flames head on was not just to absorb the power of fire and help build up Flame Essence, but to verify an important matter.

When Lin Ming was in the Southern Wilderness, he had encountered the Fire Worm Tribe's Shaman. Because the difference between their strength was too great, he hadn't even been able to absorb the Shaman's fire attacks – even resisting them had been extremely difficult.

But now that his own strength had risen, he wanted to verify at just what degree would his Heretical God Seed be able to suppress the power of fire.

‘The Fire Worm Shaman's Eternal Flame Flame Essence grade is almost the exact same as Huo Yanluo's Abyssal Flame Flame Essence. Since I can defend against Huo Yanluo's attacks, I should be able to defend against the Fire Worm Shaman, and not be like before where I didn't even have the power to strike back. After this Total Faction Martial Meeting, I will return to the Southern Wilderness and bring an end to this grudge!’

When he was at Blackwater Swamp, Lin Ming had almost died by

the hands of the Fire Worm Shaman. It simply wasn't his style to not take revenge for a deep grudge. Not to mention that the Na sisters also had an eternal enmity with the Fire Worm Shaman for killing their master, and Lin Ming also owed the Na sisters his graciousness. If it wasn't for them, Lin Ming would never have entered the Sorcerer Pagoda, and would probably have died at Thundercrash Mountain. Just by that alone, the sisters' enmity was something that he would help with.

Of course, there was also another very important reason which was the Fire Worm Tribe's Eternal Flame. In Lin Ming's Heretical God Seed, the Thunder Soul had already taken form, but in comparison, the Flame Essence was small and incomparably weak. If he were to obtain this Eternal Flame, his strength would rise by miles.

'Whether it is the Fire Worm Tribe or Fire Worm Shaman, they have slaughtered countless innocents and committed sins of every nature. To get rid of such a person is already enforcing righteous justice on behalf of the heavens!'

Lin Ming decided that after this Martial Meeting, he would first go to Huoluo Nation's Seraphic Pond and immerse his body in the Seraphic Pond waters to consolidate his strength. Afterwards, he would return to the Southern Wilderness and look for the Fire Worm Shaman to settle their debts.

As Lin Ming walked off of the stage, he heard a series of delighted cheers coming from the audience.

"Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, you were terrific, awesome!"

“Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, you did well!”

“Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, you are the sexiest guy out there!!”

The first few shouts weren't too strange, but that last ‘Junior-apprentice Brother Lin, you are the sexiest guy out there!!’ was publicly shouted out by a very bold girl in front of everyone. It was an incomparably clear shout that was crisply heard throughout the arena. Lin Ming immediately blushed red from embarrassment.

Sky Fortune Kingdom was a nation with considerably conservative values. Although Lin Ming had been able to faintly guess that there were several girls that held some feelings towards him, no one had ever said anything. He had especially never experienced such a scene before. He turned around to look, and saw that the one boldly cheering for him was a young girl from the Zither Faction.

The clear, sweet cheers were obviously done with delight. With such a scene of a beautiful and graceful girl who was crying out to him, Lin Ming was at a temporary loss on how to proceed from here.

As for the Refiner Faction disciple who was beside her, he had an appearance of a fighting c\*ck that had just been defeated.

The Refiner Faction disciple had just stated equivocally that the chances of Huo Yanluo winning was 50-50, and had even mocked



the Zither Faction disciple, saying that Qin Wuxin was inferior to Huo Yanluo. But Qin Wuxin had been able to face Lin Ming for a good period of time. As for Huo Yanluo, he had been defeated in a single move...

This made the Refiner Faction disciple wish he had a hole to crawl into. Of course, the Zither Faction girl could not miss this opportunity to ridicule him. She cheered for Lin Ming at the same time as taunting this Refiner Faction disciple.

Under the cheers of the young Zither Faction girl, Lin Ming awkwardly arrived at the contestant waiting here. He saw Qin Xingxuan walking towards him from the audience stage and asked, "Xingxuan, is there something you want?"

"Mm! I thought that you might be a bit hungry because you've been cultivating all afternoon, and didn't have lunch. The next round won't start for some time, would you like to grab something to eat with me?"

Lin Ming was surprised, and then he suddenly remembered that Qin Xingxuan had been guarding him and also hadn't eaten anything. He nodded and said, "Alright, I'm actually really hungry. Guarding me this afternoon must have been very hard on you."

"It wasn't too bad." Qin Xingxuan brightly smiled like a morning sun, and then gently pulled Lin Ming's sleeve. Although this was only a pulling of a sleeve, to Qin Xingxuan this was a very intimate action.

As she pulled Lin Ming along, Qin Xingxuan turned around to look at the young Zither Faction girl in the audience, an assertive smile on her face...

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Over half of the matches were now officially finished. The only contestants remaining with complete victories were Lin Ming, Mugu Buyu, Ouyang Ming, and Jiang Baoyun. It could be said that if there wasn't some catastrophic accident, the top three would come from among them.

The 13th round.

Zhang Yanzhao against Qin Wuxin.

Zhang Yanzhao's Blood Wave Saber's saber energy was easily scattered by Qin Wuxin's zither music. Facing Qin Wuxin's invisible sonic wave attacks, Zhang Yanzhao had no way to sense them and no way to avoid them. He easily lost.

Following that match closely was Mugu Jirong against Jiang Lanjian. The result of this match was easily predictable too. Jiang Lanjian's sword was too quick, and victory was decided in just five moves. In five moves, Jiang Lanjian's sword had reached Mugu Jirong's throat, and he hadn't even used the Concept of Wind. The truth was that besides Lin Ming, Jiang Lanjian hadn't used the Concept of Wind against anyone else.

14th round.

Huo Yanluo against Qin Wuxin. The result of this match could easily be imagined facing against Qin Wuxin's invisible ranged Profound Wind Eight Melodies. Huo Yanluo was overly dependent on the Abyssal Flames and was simply unable to muster any resistance. The final conclusion was that Huo Yanluo's own strength was limited, and the Abyssal Flame attacks were too plain and straightforward, without the ability to adapt. It was just too easy for someone to close in on him. Of course, a scene akin to when Lin Ming had directly met the flames with his long spear wouldn't happen again.

Qin Wuxin continued her series of victories. During the sixteenth round, she defeated the Mirage Faction's Huan Xiaodie with overwhelming strength. Although Huan Xiaodie transformed into 108 illusory phantoms, all of them were defeated by Qin Wuxin's zither music!

The audience thought that the strength difference between the Seven Profound Valleys' two proud talented ladies wouldn't be too great – none of them had imagined it would be like this.

Many people couldn't help but wonder: if Qin Wuxin hadn't encountered Lin Ming, just how far could she have gone without losing?

The extent of Lin Ming's power was just too confusing and complicated. Many people thought that he wouldn't even

necessarily lose to Jiang Baoyun and Mugu Buyu, they even thought he had a chance of ranking first!

The battles were becoming increasingly vivid and clear. The top four had already been locked in with Lin Ming, Mugu Buyu, Ouyang Ming, and Jiang Baoyun. Now, the two struggling for fifth were Jiang Lanjian and Qin Wuxin. Both Huo Yanluo and Zhang Yanzhao who had once been favorites for the top five were completely eliminated.

The sun gradually set in the west, and finally the matches of the day ended. Tomorrow would be the last day of finals.

There would only be 10 rounds, and in those 10 rounds, everything would be revealed.

## Chapter 279 – The Last Day

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Night fell. The moon rose above the willow branches, shining brightly in the clear dark skies.

The Seven Profound Valleys' night skies were particularly clean, as if the world itself had been washed of all impurities. This land was closed off by a massive array formation, and the heaven and earth origin energy was especially rich. One could cultivate here with twice the result from half the effort.

Lin Ming sat alone in his room. In his hand was a small deep green pill the size of a longan. It was crystal clear, just like the most precious of jades. This was the Blue Miracle Pill from the collections of Sky Fortune Kingdom's Seven Profound Martial House. It was the reward that Qin Ziya gave to Lin Ming after he defeated Ta Ku.

Even to the disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys' Total Faction, the Blue Miracle Pill was a rare and precious medicine; it was much more precious than the Crimson Gold Dragon Marrow Pill that Lin Ming had received before.

When Lin Ming had his match with Wang Mu, he had used the Blue Miracle Pill and the Body Spiritual Ichor as a gambling stake. It had caused Wang Mu to lose his composure and be attracted to the bet, ultimately causing him to lose a quota at the Seraphic Pond to Lin Ming. These sorts of pills were rare even within the depositories of Huoluo Nation's Seven Profound Martial House.

However, no matter how precious a cultivation pill was, it would inevitably have pill toxins. After taking it, one would have to refine the impurities and then eliminate the pill toxins, slowly consolidating their cultivation afterwards. It was an extremely tedious and arduous process.

When Lin Ming had obtained the Blue Miracle Pill, his breakthrough to the Pulse Condensation period was just around the corner. In order to obtain a more solid and stable foundation, Lin Ming hadn't taken the Blue Miracle Pill to break through. Instead, he waited for his true essence to overflow and naturally break through. Such a breakthrough could be called perfect.

Lin Ming swallowed down the Blue Miracle Pill, jumped in the bath barrel, and then began to meditate.

These days, he had been eating spirit fruits and vegetables that contained a very rich inherent heaven and earth origin energy. Even when he cultivated, it was like he was bathed in thick heaven and earth origin energy. He had already accumulated a vast amount of true essence in his body. After he ate the Blue Miracle Pill, Lin Ming only felt a slight numbing sensation in his bones as true essence began to flow outwards, continuously flowing through all the meridians of his body.

His Pulse Condensation period cultivation was unconsciously and slowly consolidating.

The water vapors rose, and the entire room was covered in a thick white mist. The cold moonlight shone through the window, adding a natural chilling wind to this mist.

For several hours, Lin Ming patiently pushed the true essence in his body to complete revolution after revolution.

Because Lin Ming's cultivation had improved, the fusion between his blood and the True Dragon's blood was even closer than before. Now, Lin Ming didn't even need to purposefully galvanize the azure true essence in order to bring it out, his own true essence already had an azure color. This sort of azure true essence was pale green like the fresh spring leaves of a cypress tree, and was filled with a vibrantly vivid vitality.

This azure true essence didn't only manifest when he was fighting. The azure true essence even came out when he was cultivating, and it seemed to subtly moisten and supplement Lin Ming's body, causing his meridians to be more stalwart and his bones to become denser.

Lin Ming finally finished complete absorption of the Blue Miracle Pill late at night. His early Pulse Condensation period cultivation was already fully consolidated. Now Lin Ming took out a small porcelain bottle and uncorked it. Inside of the small porcelain bottle was a sort of viscous green substance, as if it were made from liquid crystals.

This was the Body Spiritual Ichor that Lin Ming had obtained as a reward for defeating Ling Sen. The Body Spiritual Ichor was used especially to eliminate pill toxins of the body. Its effects were even more wonderful when combined with the Blue Miracle Pill.

Of course, the Body Spiritual Ichor was only a supportive medicine. In order to completely refine out the pill toxins, it would all rely on Lin Ming's own ability in the end.

Lin Ming didn't worry. After all, he was only at the early Pulse Condensation period, and was a very long distance away from the Houtian realm. There would be plenty of time to eliminate the pill toxins in his body. Whether it was the Flame Essence or Thunder Soul, both were extremely good methods of refining out pill toxins, and they also wouldn't cause his foundation to become unsteady.

The mist in the room became increasingly thick. Lin Ming sat in the water, completing revolution after revolution...

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The following morning, the dawn still lingered under the horizon. The stage was set for the last day of the Total Faction Martial Meeting.

Today was the final of the finals.

There would be 10 rounds of matches. The 11 contestants that received the most attention were Lin Ming, Ouyang Ming, Jiang Baoyun, Mugu Buyu, Jiang Lanjian, Qin Wuxin, Huo Yanluo, Zhang Yanzhao, Huan Xiaodie, Fang Qi, and Mugu Jirong.

These 11 would frequently clash in these last ten rounds. All other contestants had merely become foils.



As Lin Ming arrived just before dawn, there were very few people in the square, only shadows were visible.

At this time, Jiang Baoyun was sitting vigilantly on a mat in the contestant waiting area. His sword was in his hand, both eyes shut, as faint streams of heaven and earth origin energy converged on his body, slowly overflowing as it made cycle after cycle.

Lin Ming looked at Jiang Baoyun from afar, secretly observing the heaven and earth origin energy as it flowed through him. He thought to himself, ‘Jiang Baoyun’s cultivation is truly at a half-step Houtian. If he really were at the Houtian realm, then there would be no need for him to suppress his cultivation at this time.’

Before now, Lin Ming suspected that Jiang Baoyun had already stepped into the Houtian realm. Except, Jiang Baoyun was just like Lin Ming, and was suppressing his cultivation so he wouldn’t break through, therefore he was so confident in himself.

However, as Lin Ming watched Jiang Baoyun cultivate, he clearly saw that his cultivation was at a half-step Houtian.

“No matter what, today’s battles will show where the source of his confidence comes from.” Lin Ming said to himself. By now, Jiang Baoyun felt Lin Ming’s gaze on him and opened his eyes.

For a second, Jiang Baoyun’s eyes penetrated through the early morning darkness, as if they were twinkling stars in the night. He faintly smiled at Lin Ming, saying, “The heaven and earth origin

energy is richest just before the sun rises in the morning, especially in the Seven Profound Valleys. When the first ray of sunlight comes over the horizon, that is what my Sword Faction calls the Ascending Eastern Purple Sun, and is also the so-called Purple Air Comes From the East. If you absorb this energy it is especially beneficial to your cultivation.

Lin Ming said, “The Seven Profound Valleys is truly the holy land of cultivation. Thank you Senior-apprentice Brother Jiang for the advice.”

“You’re welcome. Sooner or later you will enter the Seven Profound Valleys. If you’d like, you may join the Sword Faction; we will welcome you with arms wide open!”

Lin Ming was a bit stunned hearing Jiang Baoyun’s heartfelt words. Invite him to join the Sword Faction? Wasn’t he afraid that he would have to split up his resources? But as Lin Ming looked at Jiang Baoyun’s face, he saw that his invitation was clearly sincere, without any underlying meanings. Of course, Jiang Baoyun had no need to fake anything.

‘This fellow is truly confident!’ Lin Ming hazily sighed. He had a premonition that if Jiang Baoyun’s shining star didn’t fall from the sky, he would definitely become a Grand Swordmaster of this generation.

There were more and more people arriving at the square. As the first ray of sunlight fell onto the Grand Hall’s square, the referee stood up and loudly said, “The tournament shall begin. Nineteenth round, first match. Jiang Baoyun against Qin Wuxin!”

These words caused the entire audience atmosphere to immediately surge to the skies. The first match of the day was actually a battle between such heavyweights. Qin Wuxin's strength was evident to all, but of course, no one thought that she could win. Still, they believed she would be able to force out Jiang Baoyun's true strength.

Lin Ming also anticipated this match, until now he still knew nothing about Jiang Baoyun.

The match hadn't even begun, and Qin Wuxin had inadvertently opened up a distance of 300 feet between them. Jiang Baoyun's sword was just too fast. If the distance wasn't great enough, then Qin Wuxin wouldn't even have time to play a single note before she was defeated.

“Match, start!”

With the referee's announcement, Qin Wuxin immediately played the Profound Wind Eight Melodies. Against Jiang Baoyun, there was no need to hold anything back, she would immediately start with everything she had. Qin Wuxin was clearly aware that if she didn't use her ultimate ability at the start, she would never have the opportunity to do so.

The Profound Wind Eight Melodies was invisible and formless, ever-changing with endless twists and turns.

Out of all the current contestants besides Lin Ming, there were

very few people that could capture the attack patterns of the Profound Wind Eight Melodies. This was part of the reason the Zither Faction's attack methods were so terrifying; how could you defend against attacks you couldn't see?

Jiang Baoyun's ten fingers flexed, condensing phantoms of sword light in the air. He used sword fingers as before.

Chi chi chi chi chi!

The sound was just like silk being torn to shreds. The invisible Profound Wind Eight Melodies were all completely broken in space!

Qin Wuxin's mind shook. She had already expected that the Profound Wind Eight Melodies would be broken by Jiang Baoyun, but she hadn't thought it would be done so easily. He had only used sword fingers as before.

After easily breaking the Profound Wind Eight Melodies, Jiang Baoyun made two fingers into a sword and slashed out. A sword light flew towards Qin Wuxin, its speed reaching an extreme. Qin Wuxin bit her teeth and her right hand suddenly flicked across the zither strings. There was a sharp twang as several musical notes sprung forth, directly clashing with that sword light.

Chi chi chi!

The sword light broke through three notes and clashed with the

last note before finally dissipating together.

Seeing a single sword light break through three notes, Qin Wuxin let out a light sigh and retrieved the zither to her arms. She coldly said, “I admit defeat.”

Jiang Baoyun smiled. “I haven’t seen Junior-apprentice Sister Qin for three years and yet your strength has progressed so astonishingly quickly. Perhaps in two years or less, if I fight Junior-apprentice Sister Qin again, I’ll have to use everything I have.”

Qin Wuxin was the youngest of all the direct disciples. She was only 18 years old, and was more than a year and a half younger than Jiang Baoyun. In terms of talent, within the direct disciples she was only inferior to Jiang Baoyun. She was indeed superior to Jiang Lanjian and Ouyang Ming.

Qin Wuxin seriously looked at Jiang Baoyun, and slowly said, stressing every syllable, “At that time, I will at least force you to use your sword!”

“Naturally! In fact, today you’ve already broken my sword palm. If this match continued any longer, I would have had to take out my sword.”

Qin Wuxin turned around to leave the stage, and the referee announced Jiang Baoyun’s victory.

Suddenly, there was a collective gasp from the audience. Everyone expected that Jiang Baoyun would win, but none thought he would win with such ease. He had only used his hands to shatter Qin Wuxin's Profound Wind Eight Melodies – he hadn't even taken out his sword. This disparity between direct disciples was much greater than they had imagined.

“Jiang Baoyun is too strong! Who can defeat him? Even Qin Wuxin was defeated so easily. Lin Ming and Ouyang Ming are simply not his match!”

“If Jiang Baoyun was serious, he might defeat Lin Ming and Ouyang Ming in five moves!”

“I fear that even Mugu Buyu isn't skilled enough. I thought that Mugu Buyu would be able to suppress Jiang Baoyun because he reached the Essence Integration boundary, but now it seems that it would be great if he could just force Jiang Baoyun's hidden cards.”

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As the audience discussed the match, even Lin Ming was stunned.

Just as Lin Ming had constantly surprised Jiang Baoyun, Jiang Baoyun also constantly surprised Lin Ming. Before these final matches, both of them were just like massive icebergs, only exposing the tip to each other.

After Jiang Baoyun and Qin Wuxin's match, there were several

unimportant matches. Then, right after, there was a match that created a startling furor of excitement.

Lin Ming against Ouyang Ming.

This was a long awaited showdown that the audience had been highly anticipating.

On one side was Ouyang Ming, who was the third ranked contestant from the last Total Faction Martial Meeting. On the other side was Lin Ming, who was considered the greatest dark horse of this Total Faction Martial Meeting. This match could be considered to be extremely confusing, no one knew which side would win.

## Chapter 280 – Soaring Strength

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Up until now, Ouyang Ming hadn't encountered many top masters. He had only faced off against Fang Qi, Mugu Jirong, and Huan Xiaodie. Of these three matches, he had emerged victorious through overwhelming superiority; he hadn't been forced to show any of his true strength.

However, no one doubted Ouyang Ming's power. In the last Total Faction Martial Meeting, he had defeated Jiang Baoyun for the first time. He was once considered as the one with the highest chances of becoming the next Martial Meeting champion, but he never imagined that Jiang Baoyun would recover from his loss and become a terrifying presence that occupied the spotlight and suppressed Ouyang Ming.

In comparison to Ouyang Ming who hadn't faced any great obstacles on his way to a string of complete victories, Lin Ming could be said to have had to overcome one great hardship after another. Now, Lin Ming's fame was only inferior to Jiang Baoyun and Mugu Buyu, and was tied with Ouyang Ming.

As the referee announced the start of the match, the arena began to buzz with excitement. The crowd was neatly divided in half for those who favored Lin Ming and those who favored Ouyang Ming.

Many of the Acacia Faction disciples were screaming out cheers for Ouyang Ming. In comparison, the cheers for the visiting Lin Ming were much weaker. Besides the martial artists of the 36 countries cheering for him, there were the young girls of the Zither Faction who had good impressions of him.



On the martial stage, Ouyang Ming was dressed in complete white, and he held an iron folding fan in his hand. His long black hair was tied back with a silk ribbon, and he looked just like a handsome royal son. From his head to his toes, he had the makings of a jade tree facing the gentle wind.

As a disciple of the Acacia Faction, Ouyang Ming naturally had hordes of cawing girls by his side, and groups of wives and concubines. Even so, there were still many young and beautiful girls that threw themselves at him of their own initiative. One reason was because Ouyang Ming's looks were simply outstanding like a heavenly prince, and the second reason was because of Ouyang Ming's status as a core disciple. If they could follow by his side, they would be able to obtain more resources and break through to the Pulse Condensation period more easily.

200 feet away from Ouyang Ming, Lin Ming was standing straight, holding a long silver spear in his hand. His posture was upright and steady. Because Lin Ming had been practicing a Body Transformation cultivation method of the highest rank for the past six months, his body had been maturing at a very high rate. Although he was only 16 years old now, he wasn't much shorter than the tall and handsome Ouyang Ming.

"This boy, I don't know what the limit of his strength is..." As Ouyang Ming faced Lin Ming, he had a faint feeling in his heart that he wouldn't be able to win. It was the same feeling as if he was looking at Mugu Buyu.

Before this point, he never imagined that he would be pressured

so much by a disciple from the 36 countries.

Lin Ming was a well-rounded fighter, he was simply versatile in all aspects of combat. Such a person was a very rare existence. Most geniuses had a particular advantage that served as their point of superiority, but they also had a corresponding weakness to go with it. For instance, Qin Wuxin's attacks were invisible and formless and they were difficult to avoid; but once one was able to close in on her and engage in close-range battle, one would basically have won.

As for Huo Yanluo and Zhang Yanzhao, those two had an incomparably overwhelming offensive attack power, but their true combat prowess was limited. Once one dodged their attacks, they would easily lose. Even if it was someone like Jiang Lanjian who seemed to be a versatile fighter, he still had weaknesses in his insufficient attack momentum and his weak defensive power.

Because of the different strengths and weaknesses of geniuses, they would usually serve to restrain each other. As long as they had the same strength and the same talent, victory would be settled by which skills held advantages over others.

But as for Lin Ming, he was simply an all-around combat king. His aura was formidable, and his spear was fierce and sharp. His attacks contained the Concept of Wind, making them incomparably swift. There wasn't even need to mention his defensive capabilities. He had been able to take Jiang Lanjian's full attack strike head-on and come out with only a few scratches! In terms of movement speed, his agility was simply like gods and ghosts – there was almost no weakness to him!

Against a master who didn't seem to have any weaknesses at all, Ouyang Ming just didn't know what he could do to win.

As the match officially started, Ouyang Ming didn't bother saying any useless words. He unfolded the iron fan in his hands.

“Absolute Life Purple Flame!”

With a ‘chi chi’ sound, a massive purple flame burst out from his iron fan, blazing in the air like an inferno. This purple fire was a much deeper color than the Purple Flame Bone Lance that had been used by Ouyang Zifeng.

Fuu!

The purple inferno fired towards Lin Ming, and a bone chilling energy rolled off in front it. This freezing cold flame was incomparably strange.

Azure true essence erupted forth. Lin Ming took a step forwards and thrust out with his spear. 10,000 vibrating true essence filaments savagely ran out.

Bang!

The purple flames immediately disintegrated; they had been scattered by Flow like Silk.

After reaching the early Pulse Condensation period, combined with the power of the Flow like Silk breakthrough, the strength of Lin Ming's past vibrating true essence could not compare to its current incarnation.

Ouyang Ming's expression suddenly changed for the worse. Although he hadn't held on to any hope that the purple flames would be able to defeat Lin Ming, he hadn't thought that Lin Ming would so easily destroy his flames.

“Purple Flame Bone Lance!”

“Scythe of the Death God!”

Ouyang Ming gave a loud shout, and a purple bone lance made of fire appeared by his side. Compared to Ouyang Zifeng, it was as if Ouyang Ming's bone lance instantly appeared by his side, shooting forwards without even needing any time to condense his true essence. Not only that, but as he flourished his fan, a purple scythe appeared, flying forwards to cut off Lin Ming's head!

Facing this roaring attack, Lin Ming maintained a completely indifferent expression. His feet moved and his speed instantly achieved the limit.

Ka!

A shadow blurred, and Lin Ming broke through a narrow gap

between the Purple Flame Bone Lance and Scythe of the Death God. His spear was wreathed in arcs of lightning; it contained the Concept of Wind and power of thunder, thrusting straight towards Ouyang Ming's side!

Ouyang Ming's heart went cold and he instantly drew back. At the same time, he waved his fan back and forth, and clouds of purple flame seemed to blossom in front of him, forming layers of defensive fire that protected his body!

Bang!

10,000 filaments of vibrating azure true essence rampaged out. The thick coils of thunder were just like massive purple snakes that twisted in a frenzy. The purple barriers of flame were only able to resist for a split second before being torn apart by the spear!

Seeing the cold spearpoint come towards him, Ouyang Ming's pupils contracted. He hadn't imagined that a casual spear thrust of Lin Ming's had achieved such a terrifying degree of strength. It had even broken through three of his purple flame cloud shields!

He instantly realized that if he was struck even once by this spear, he would lose without a doubt. When Lin Ming had faced Fang Qi, a single spear of his had broken through five continuous Nine Circles of Blue Light Arrays. Ouyang Ming was confident, but he didn't believe that the true essence that protected his body was any stronger than five layers of Nine Circles of Blue Light Arrays.

This Lin Ming, his attack power was too abnormal!

“Butterflies Dance on 100 Flowers!”

Ouyang Ming’s body instantly turned into a series of shadows, evading the spear by dancing on the edge of destruction.

“Movement martial skill?” Lin Ming watched as Ouyang Ming flitted around like a butterfly hovering over flowers, his form drifting from end to end. This was obviously an extremely gorgeous and sublime avoidance movement skill. There were over a dozen images that seemed real and fake at the same time; it was impossible for a normal martial artist to distinguish just where Ouyang Ming’s true self was. It was futile to attack, one could only passively leave themselves vulnerable to attack. Not only that, but it was futile to guess just where Ouyang Ming’s attack came from.

However, to Lin Ming, none of this was a problem. He simply closed his eyes and let his soul force fuse into the Concept of Wind. Suddenly, Lin Ming’s figure disappeared!

“Total Annihilation!”

Lin Ming used the same constant Foundation Spear Technique and swept out into space. But in the moment that Lin Ming swept out with his spear, Ouyang Ming appeared just under the spearhead as if he had ran into it.

Ouyang Ming’s instantly paled. His Butterflies Dance on 100 Flowers had been seen through in a single try!!??

At this time Ouyang Ming could not evade, collision was inevitable. He had to take this attack head-on!

Pa!

The iron fan opened, and Ouyang Ming cried out, pushing all of the true essence within his body to the limit. A bluish purple evil flame shrieked as it ran out of the iron fan, directly cleaving towards the spearpoint.

Bang!

The bluish purple evil flame smashed against the purple thunder, the power of thunderbolts exploded out!

In the moment that the iron fan struck the spearpoint, Ouyang Ming felt as if he had chopped against a mountain. 10,000 vibrating true essence filaments cascaded forth and an incomparably vast peerless vibration directly cracked apart Ouyang Ming's grip, causing his right arm to lose all feeling.

“This is...!”

Ouyang Ming felt as if his chest had been hit by a massive hammer. There was a tangy copper taste in the back of his throat, and Ouyang Ming spat out a mouthful of blood as he flew backwards and struck the martial stage's protective barrier.

This unexpected result caused the entire audience to pause, slack-jawed. Even Jiang Lanjian who usually highly respected Lin Ming's abilities was looking at this scene, an extremely incredulous expression coloring his face.

Ouyang Ming, who had ranked third place during the last Total Faction Martial Meeting was defeated so easily?

The truth was that Jiang Lanjian had expected that Lin Ming would win. However, he thought that the two contestants would have a fierce dogfight where each one would use hidden card after hidden card, finally ending with Lin Ming as victor through a small advantage. He hadn't expected that Lin Ming would prevail in less than 20 moves.

"How did Ouyang Ming lose so easily? Doesn't he have any more cards in his hands?" Jiang Lanjian just couldn't believe this. He had also lost to Ouyang Ming during the last Total Faction Martial Meeting, and this time, he didn't have much confidence that he would be able to defeat Ouyang Ming. However, Lin Ming had actually defeated Ouyang Ming so easily!

Jiang Baoyun slowly said, "Ouyang Ming already used the cards in his hands, and that was his Perfect fifth stage of the 'Divine Acacia Power'. Absolute Life Purple Flame and Scythe of the Death God are both moves that can only be used after reaching the fifth layer of the 'Divine Acacia Power'. It's just that they were easily broken by Lin Ming. Many people didn't see just how strong Ouyang Ming's attacks were... it's not that Ouyang Ming is weak, but that Lin Ming is too strong. After breaking through to the Pulse Condensation period, his strength has soared past what it



once was!”

Jiang Baoyun took a deep breath. Normally when a martial artist broke through to the Pulse Condensation period from the peak Bone Forging stage, their strength wouldn't increase too much.

However, Lin Ming wasn't a normal martial artist. The method in which he reached Pulse Condensation was through a perfect breakthrough, and his foundation was extremely solid. Not only that, but the cultivation method he practiced was the 'Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians'. After breaking through each stage, his true essence would grow incomparably thicker and purer than a martial artist at the same stage.

Also, Lin Ming's azure true essence, Flow like Silk, and Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder were absurdly abnormal and overpowered abilities. If his true essence was twice as strong, then his attack power would be three times, four times, or even five times greater!

So from the peak Bone Forging stage to the Pulse Condensation period, Lin Ming had experienced a great leap in strength!

“Ouyang Ming was defeated! Now there are only three people left that still have a flawless winning streak!”

“Besides Mugu Buyu and Jiang Baoyun, Lin Ming has already fought with most of the other masters, except for Huan Xiaodie and Mugu Jirong. However, those two are not his match. Even if Lin Ming lost to Mugu Buyu and Jiang Baoyun, he would still reach

the top three!”

The audience discussed the situation of the tournament and the possible outcomes. This dark horse known as Lin Ming was simply too dark. A disciple of the 36 countries had entered the Total Faction Martial Meeting for the first time and had already reached the top three rankings. Moreover, he had just reached 16 years of age. This was simply too shocking for anyone to comprehend.

After Lin Ming walked offstage, he saw Mugu Buyu staring at him. Mugu Buyu’s skinny mummy face still had his trademark tricky smile. But as he looked at Lin Ming’s eyes, his eyes no longer held the previous teasing banter and contempt. Instead, there was a solemn, dignified expression.

Clearly, Mugu Buyu finally felt threatened by Lin Ming.

# Chapter 281 – Entering The Top Three

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As the tournament continued, top level geniuses frequently collided.

During the 20th round, Jiang Lanjian fought against Qin Wuxin.

Qin Wuxin and Jiang Lanjian's styles could be said to mutually oppose each other. Qin Wuxin was slow and she was poor at melee combat. As for Jiang Lanjian, he was just the opposite. Qin Wuxin's attacks were sharp and invisible, and Jiang Lanjian happened to have inadequate defensive capabilities.

It was difficult to predict who would be the winner this match.

On the martial stage, Qin Wuxin's white robe fluttered in the wind. Jiang Lanjian was wearing a tight-fitting green robe, holding his sword as he stood there calmly.

They were 200 feet apart. If Jiang Lanjian could completely close this distance, then victory was his. If he couldn't, then he would undoubtedly be defeated.

After the match started, the two contestants went all out with everything they had. Qin Wuxin immediately played the *Profound Wind Eight Melodies*, and Jiang Lanjian fused the *Concept of Wind* into his sword. This was the first time that Jiang Lanjian had used the *Concept of Wind* ever since being defeated by Lin Ming. Not only that, but he used it right at the beginning. Jiang Lanjian was aware that if he didn't use it now, he wouldn't have the chance to

later.

The zither sound wave attacks were invisible and formless. Jiang Lanjian's soul force was limited, and he wasn't able to sense them in the wind. He could only use sword light to protect his body. With the support of the Concept of Wind, Jiang Lanjian's sword formed a vortex of sword energy. Dozens of wind blades shot out in all directions, crashing into the hidden murderous intent that was hiding in the void.

Ding ding ding!

Crisp and clear sounds resounded in the air, as if zither strings were snapping apart. Jiang Lanjian was breaking apart the zither notes, but his sword light was also constantly being chipped away. Qin Wuxin's Profound Wind Eight Melodies was an incomparably mysterious technique. The zither sounds contained a formidable vibrating power. A single sound was able to shatter several sword lights!

Jiang Lanjian was repeatedly trapped and cornered by this zither music, and was unable to close in on Qin Wuxin. However, Qin Wuxin did not dare to be arrogant and underestimate her enemy. As long as she gave him even the slightest chance, Jiang Lanjian would instantly close the distance.

Qin Wuxin wasn't fast, but she could still move with her zither suspended in front of her, without interrupting her melody. As a result, Jiang Lanjian was unable to catch up to her.

Ordinary sounds were mixed in with the lethal zither music of the Profound Wind Eight Melodies; it was simply like a dangerous tide. Jiang Lanjian was encompassed by this zither music as if he had fallen down into a bog, and his Concept of Wind was constantly being dashed to pieces.

Jiang Lanjian knew that if he stayed on the defensive and didn't attack, he would be defeated sooner or later. All he had to do was miss a single sound and he would be in danger.

“Graceful Sword!”

Jiang Lanjian fiercely clenched his teeth and completely gave up his sword light defense. He stimulated all of the true essence to enhance the protection of his body, and flew forward at an extreme speed, his sword thrusting straight towards Qin Wuxin's throat.

His speed quickly reached the limit of his ability. He was only about a few hundred feet away. As long as he wasn't struck by any zither music, he could close this distance in a flash!

Ka!

A zither soundwave struck against Jiang Lanjian's bodily true essence, the power of vibration erupted forth!

It was just a sound, but all of Jiang Lanjian's clothes broke as if he had suffered a major blow, and his extreme speed suddenly

came to a halt.

At this point, Qin Wuxin had become wholeheartedly engrossed in this match, and was waiting for any opportunity to subdue her opponent; how could she miss this wonderful opportunity?

A finger flicked out, and two zither notes struck Jiang Lanjian. Jiang Lanjian's bodily true essence broke apart, and he was sent flying backwards.

“Qin Wuxin, victory!”

With the referee's announcement, Qin Wuxin let out a light breath. It had been very difficult for her to win this match. Her strength and Jiang Lanjian's were very similar to each other, and the reason she could win this time had a bit to do with luck. When Jiang Lanjian had desperately staked everything on his last move and used Graceful Sword, if he hadn't struck a zither note in the air, then the one that would have been defeated was her.

With Qin Wuxin's victory, the young girls of the Zither Faction burst into cheers. With this win, even if Qin Wuxin lost to Ouyang Ming, Mugu Buyu, and the others, she would still advance to the top five.

The 21st round, Lin Ming against Mugu Jirong.

Mugu Jirong didn't bother fighting Lin Ming, he simply admitted defeat right at the start. There was nothing else he could have

done. Puppet Masters were powerful, but they also had a fatal weakness. That was that once their puppets were lost, they would have nothing left.

Mugu Jirong still had a total of three puppets left. But Lin Ming's attack power was just too abnormal, it wouldn't be strange if he lost another puppet or two. To Mugu Jirong, this sent him into a tearless grief, a state of hopelessness beyond crying. He also had hopes of advancing to the top 10.

The 22nd round, Lin Ming against Huan Xiaodie.

This was a match without an ounce of suspense from the audience. Even the young boys and girls of the Mirage Faction didn't believe that their Senior-apprentice Sister Huan had a chance of winning.

From the very start of the match, Huan Xiaodie created her trademark 108 phantoms. However, Lin Ming used his Flow like Silk, and 10,000 vibrating true essence filaments rushed forth, destroying every phantom.

After that, Huan Xiaodie still put up a symbolic struggle and cast some illusions. But this too was easily broken by Lin Ming.

Using Ouyang Ming's own words, Lin Ming was a versatile genius who excelled in multiple fields. Just in terms of discussing his defensive abilities, Lin Ming's bodily defensive power was simply abnormal, and his soul defensive power was even more freakish. The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder had integrated into his

spiritual sea, so Lin Ming could simply stand motionless onstage and let Huan Xiaodie throw whatever illusions she could towards him.

Lin Ming could sense that Huan Xiaodie hadn't been putting in her full effort, and was only symbolically displaying some moves so that she wouldn't lose face. Such being the case, Lin Ming would naturally not let a girl lose face.

After several moves, Huan Xiaodie smiled and said, "Junior-apprentice Brother Lin's strength is amazing, I admit defeat."

After she said that, she turned around to leave the stage.

But Lin Ming's mind suddenly stirred. He said, "Senior-apprentice Sister Huan, please wait."

"Mm?" Huan Xiaodie turned around, her bright eyes winking at him, "What matter does Junior-apprentice Brother Lin have to say?"

"I would like to ask Senior-apprentice Sister Huan if the Mirage Faction has some sort of transformation technique that can change one's appearance, and would make it so that it can't be seen through by anyone whose cultivation isn't too far apart?"

Huan Xiaodie said, "There is. Why, is Junior-apprentice Brother Lin interested?"



Lin Ming nodded. Ever since he had fallen for Bi Luo's trap, he had been very interested in this sort of technique. This technique could be said to be almost necessary if one wanted to travel around and commit crimes like murder and arson.

If he had this ability, it would be easier and convenient to hide his identity.

Huan Xiaodie impishly laughed, slyly smiling as she said, "This skill can't be considered a core technique or anything in the Mirage Faction. If disciples of other factions wanted to study it, they could as long as they paid a sufficient amount of true essence stones. But if Junior-apprentice Brother Lin is interested and wouldn't like to pay true essence stones, I can... personally... teach you~~~~"

Huan Xiaodie's last sentence had an extremely enticing and inviting purr, causing the heart of anyone who heard it to be a bit stirred.

Lin Ming subconsciously nodded and said, "Then I'll have to thank Senior-apprentice Sister Huan."

Lin Ming suddenly realized why although Qin Wuxin and Huan Xiaodie had been labeled the proud twins of the Seven Profound Valleys' younger generation, their strength had ultimately diverged so far.

Of the two, one wholeheartedly walked the martial path and was pure and ascetic in their heart. She cultivated the zither until she finally reached Large Success of her Zither Heart. As for the other,

she played around most of the time, amusing herself and laughing at the world. She seemed indifferent to any sort of illusion martial arts. Like this, the difference in their strength would naturally become greater over time.

Of course, Lin Ming didn't care much at all about these things. With Huan Xiaodie to personally teach him, this would be the best way to learn. Lin Ming earnestly wished to comprehensively understand appearance changing techniques.

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22nd round, fifth match. Ouyang Ming against Qin Wuxin!

Although Ouyang Ming gave the impression that he was more powerful, Qin Wuxin was no pushover; this wouldn't be a one-sided battle.

The question was: just how would Ouyang Ming defend against Qin Wuxin's invisible zither music?

From the very start of the match, Ouyang Ming used his Perfect fifth layer of the Divine Acacia Power, shrouding his entire body in purple flames. Under his control, the purple flames formed clouds that revolved around his body, becoming thick shields of flame. The audience were not strangers to this flame shield. When Ouyang Ming had faced Lin Ming, he had also used his purple flame shield, but the result had been that all three layers of his flame shield had been pierced by Lin Ming's spear!

After that, Ouyang Ming had been forced to give up his purple flame shield and use Butterflies Dance on 100 Flowers to escape. However, he had only managed to dodge for a short time. Eventually, he had been swept up by Lin Ming's spear and sent flying away.

Because of this, the audience didn't feel that the purple flame shield was a good skill. However, as Qin Wuxin played the Profound Wind Eight Melodies, the invisible sonic attacks were actually blocked by the purple flame shield, unable to break it.

The power of vibration was able to break through a few layers of the purple flame shield. But right after, a new power of fire would continuously rise up to fill in whatever was broken.

After reaching the Perfect fifth layer of the Divine Acacia Power, Ouyang Ming's true essence had become thick to the point of terrifying others. If one couldn't do what Lin Ming did when he broke through the entire shield with his spear, then Ouyang Ming would be able to continuously restore it with his true essence.

Pa!

Ouyang Ming turned the iron fan in his hands, sending a Scythe of the Death God cutting towards Qin Wuxin!

Qin Wuxin grit her teeth, her right hand fiercely dancing across the zither strings, "Profound Wind Eight Melodies!"

Peng peng peng peng!

The eight notes of music impacted on the Scythe of the Dead God, dispersing the purple flame scythe.

However, Ouyang Ming used this opportunity run forwards until he was less than 100 feet away. “Junior-apprentice Sister Qin, your zither attacks are truly fierce, unfortunately... your attacks are too singular, they are too easily predicted.”

Hoh!

The purple flame shield erupted forth, blocking the second round of Qin Wuxin’s zither attacks. Qin Wuxin took this opportunity to pull away, but Ouyang Ming continued pressing down on her.

Zither note after zither note was sent out. Although Ouyang Ming encountered many obstacles as he sped forwards, he was still able to close in more and more on Qin Wuxin. Because Qin Wuxin had to send out a salvo of Profound Wind Eight Melodies, she was already at the limit of what her true essence could support. But as for Ouyang Ming, his true essence was very thick and he didn’t consume too much.

Pa!

The iron fan opened once again, a mere three feet away from Qin Wuxin’s slender jade-like neck!

Now that the battle had reached this point, the outcome was basically decided. Qin Wuxin had lost.

The audience gasped. In the finals, Ouyang Ming hadn't encountered many strong opponents. He was smoothly defeating everyone he fought until he ran into Lin Ming, and was thoroughly defeated himself. Many people felt that it was because Ouyang Ming wasn't fierce enough until they witnessed this match. Ouyang Ming had defeated Qin Wuxin by a significantly large margin of superiority.

This really made everyone aware of the fact that Ouyang Ming had taken third place during the last Total Faction Martial Meeting; his strength couldn't be doubted.

The reason that Ouyang Ming had been defeated by Lin Ming was because Lin Ming was that much stronger.

"Lin Ming is already steadily in the top three. There is only Jiang Baoyun and Mugu Buyu left. I'm really looking forward to their matches."

"If Lin Ming can win the next match, he will be second. If he can win the next two matches, he will become the champion!"

"Champion? How could he possibly come in first place? Jiang Baoyun is just too abnormal. When he fought Qin Wuxin, he didn't even use his sword, even Lin Ming wasn't that strong. He just isn't Jiang Baoyun's match. At most he will struggle with Mugu Buyu, but even Mugu Buyu hasn't revealed his true strength."

As these people spoke, another heavyweight match began.

Mugu Buyu against Jiang Lanjian!

## Chapter 282 – Lin Ming VS Mugu Buyu

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Normally after a Puppet Master stepped into the Xiantian realm, he would be able to reach the Essence Integration boundary. But Mugu Buyu had managed to do so with a cultivation of only a half-step to Houtian. Just based on this point alone, no one believed that Jiang Lanjian had even a small chance of winning.

After the match started, Mugu Buyu released a spider puppet from his bag. Up until now, he had only used this spider puppet, and appeared as if he would also only use this spider puppet to deal with Jiang Lanjian.

“Is that just the spider puppet?”

“Mugu Buyu is too arrogant!”

Jiang Lanjian frowned. He would be the first to admit that he wasn't Mugu Buyu's match. Still, for Mugu Buyu to only bring out his weakest puppet to deal with him, he was just being looked down on too much.

“Concept of Wind!”

True essence immediately circulated through Jiang Lanjian's body. He cut out with the longsword in his hand, and several dozens of sword lights thrust straight towards Mugu Buyu. At that same time, his footsteps flashed, and his figure instantly vanished.

Woosh!

Jiang Lanjian appeared like a ghost by Mugu Buyu's side. It wasn't wrong that the spider puppet was powerful, but its reactions were extremely slow. Under the power of Jiang Lanjian's extreme speed, the spider puppet wasn't able to respond at all; it was just like a random decoration. Jiang Lanjian had simply stepped around it.

Although a Puppet Master had a very formidable combat prowess, they also had a fatal weakness, and that was because they were a Puppet Master. A Puppet Master was similar to the disciples of the Zither Faction. Their speed was slow, and they had weak defenses. Their close range combat capability was nearly negligible.

But Jiang Lanjian was just the opposite. He was magnificently quick, his sword was fast and fierce, and once he approached someone, his attacks were like a hurricane!

Seeing Jiang Lanjian suddenly close in on Mugu Buyu, the audience's eyes widened. Would Mugu Buyu fall here? He had only brought out his weakest spider puppet to deal with Jiang Lanjian, this Mugu Buyu was too brazen!

A whirlwind howled, and Jiang Lanjian's sword cut forth, this sword contained all of his aspirations!

Clang!



There was the sound of metal colliding, and Jiang Lanjian's sword hadn't been able to cut down anything. He couldn't believe his eyes as he looked down at the sword in his hand. This sword contained the Concept of Wind, and yet it was still kept off by Mugu Buyu just raising his hand!

How was this possible?

Even if it was Lin Ming who had an extremely formidable defensive power, he could only bounce off the sword. It was impossible for him to be like Mugu Buyu and directly hold off the sword with his hand!

Jiang Lanjian's sense told him that something was wrong here, and he wanted to pull out his sword and retreat. However, he was aghast to find that his sword was stuck. On Mugu Buyu's arm, there seemed to be black tentacles that writhed out like massive earthworms, wrapping around his sword.

Jiang Lanjian's expression changed. What the hell was this? Was this a human body?

“Die!”

Mugu Buyu gave a shrieking cry, and his left hand's fingernail suddenly turned into a foot long sharp barb, aiming towards Jiang Lanjian's hand!

At this moment, the only way that Jiang Lanjian could avoid this

strike was if he abandoned the sword in his hand. But to a swordsman, the sword in their hand was their life. They would rather lose their hand than abandon their blade!

“Concept of Wind!”

Jiang Lanjian cried out, and true essence erupted from his body. The sword in his hand twisted with sword wind, and all the black tentacles were cut off by Jiang Lanjian. However, his speed was ultimately too slow. Mugu Buyu’s long barbed nail caught onto his chest, and that sharp claw pierced through Jiang Lanjian’s chest – blood splashed everywhere!

Jiang Lanjian’s chest was coated crimson with blood.

Jiang Lanjian clenched his teeth as he forcefully drew out his longsword from Mugu Buyu’s hand. He kneeled on one knee, his chest bleeding profusely. That foot-long barb was enough to stab his internal organs!

“You would die to pull out your sword? You are really such a stupid boy!” Mugu Buyu kicked Jiang Lanjian over, mockingly laughing.

As the Sword Faction disciples in the audience saw this, they were filled with indignation and rage. Mugu Buyu was too contemptuous, this was more than insulting Jiang Lanjian.

But even if they were angry, there was nothing they could do to

Mugu Buyu. After all, Mugu Buyu had defeated Jiang Lanjian in a fair match. No matter the situation, that was the truth.

If they wanted to take revenge for Jiang Lanjian, they could only challenge Mugu Buyu to an honest match onstage. Unfortunately, there was not a single one among them that was Mugu Buyu's match. Like this, they could only swallow this insult.

Jiang Lanjian was lifted on a stretcher and brought offstage. He had been heavily injured. Although the Seven Profound Valleys had a vast amount of rare and precious healing medicines, none of them were capable of allowing Jiang Lanjian to fully recover in an hour and completely restore his combat effectiveness.

Jiang Baoyun looked at Jiang Lanjian's chest wound, his face like the surface of a calm lake. He lifted his head to stare at Mugu Buyu with disdain.

Mugu Buyu strangely smiled, "Jejeje, you Sword Faction disciples' defenses are simply thin like paper. I just gently caressed him and he's already become like this. If it wasn't for me promptly receiving my hand, then his heart would have already been destroyed by me!"

Jiang Baoyun didn't become angry or even heated. He just coldly said, "Your words are useless. Everything will become clear on the martial stage!"

Mugu Buyu's provocation was clearly transmitted to everyone. This was his sign that he did not fear anyone, not even Jiang

Baoyun was an exception!

It wasn't just Lin Ming and Jiang Baoyun who were constantly surprising the audience with the strength that they revealed, Mugu Buyu was the same! He too was just like a massive iceberg floating in the water. Only the tip of his abilities had been seen so far.

The three great elites of the younger generation had a strength that far surpassed the champions of the last several Total Faction Martial Meetings. If it weren't for these three individuals, then Ouyang Ming's own strength would have been enough to win the tournament.

"How did Mugu Buyu do it? How was he able to use his arm to block Jiang Lanjian's sword? And what were those black tentacles?"

"I have no idea. Those Puppet Faction fellows are just too eccentric and bizarre. They rarely come into contact with other factions, no one has any idea what they are doing most of the time."

"Could it be... they transformed their own bodies? They are just a gaggle of mad men!"

As the audience spoke, all sorts of theories were tossed about. The only thing that they were able to say for sure was that close combat was no longer a weakness of Mugu Buyu!

He had a formidable defensive power, formidable close combat ability, and even better long-range attacks. With the coordination of numerous puppets, this was a completely comprehensive three dimensional attack method.

Mugu Buyu and Lin Ming were the same; they were both extremely versatile combat geniuses!

Moreover, he was clearly more powerful than Lin Ming!

As the Sword Faction disciples realized this, they secretly became nervous. Would Jiang Baoyun be enough? Would he be okay?

At this time, this was no longer just a match between Jiang Baoyun and Mugu Buyu. After such a grievous insult to their pride, this had already become a matter of honor to the Sword Faction. If Jiang Baoyun was defeated, the Sword Faction really wouldn't be able to lift up their heads from the shame.

However, Mugu Buyu and Jiang Baoyun's fight hadn't happened yet. On the contrary, the first one that Mugu Buyu would fight would actually be Lin Ming.

As the referee announced this matchup, the entire arena started to boil with excitement. This battle between Lin Ming and Mugu Buyu would be a battle between two versatile geniuses at the pinnacle of talent!

For the first time, the country bumpkin Lin Ming's cheers

surpassed those of his opponent.

The Sword Faction disciples and the young Zither Faction girls all cheered for Lin Ming. In comparison, almost no one cheered for Mugu Buyu. The Puppet Faction disciples were already scarce, and at this Total Faction Martial Meeting only a few of them showed up. Not only that, but each of them had a very queer and strange temperament, they would never do something so boring like cheering. In addition to that, the Puppet Faction had never been very popular with the other factions. The Array Faction, Refiner Faction, and most others didn't have a favorable impression of the Puppet Faction, so naturally they wouldn't cheer for Mugu Buyu.

However, although there were many people that cheered for Lin Ming, there were only a few that actually had confidence in him.

Indeed, Lin Ming's strength had already exceeded the expectations that others had placed on him. He had defeated Fang Qi, Jiang Lanjian, Qin Wuxin, and then Ouyang Ming. Time and time again, he made others reevaluate the limit of his strength.

But Mugu Buyu was the same. First he had revealed his Essence Integration boundary, and then he revealed his powerful close-combat ability. Now his current momentum was in no way weaker than Jiang Baoyun!

On the martial stage, Lin Ming stood 100 feet away from Mugu Buyu. During this Total Faction Martial Meeting, what Lin Ming had experienced had really opened his eyes. He had seen a zither musician, an array master, and now a puppet master, three exceedingly different and special fighting styles. And this was only

within the relatively small Seven Profound lands. If this were to be extended to the entire Sky Spy Spill Continent, who knew how many weird and fantastic fighting styles there would be.

Mugu Buyu opened the bag on his back, and a series of three puppets jumped up. First was the spider puppet, the second was a mummy, and the last one was a massive eight-clawed alligator.

Mugu Buyu had finally taken out other puppets, and not only that, but he had taken them out from the start, “Before, I never thought that you would come this far. When you defeated Ouyang Ming so easily, that really surprised me. You are the first one among the younger generation to startle me so greatly. But, this is not because of how strong you are, but because how fast you are growing. For you to already force me to use three puppets from the start is enough for you to take pride in.”

“Words are useless. Let’s fight!”

As his voice fell, the Heavy Profound Soft Spear that Lin Ming gripped in his hand began to emit a faint azure color, azure true essence emerged out. Endless true essence vibrations surged forth recklessly, even shaking the air.

Facing Mugu Buyu, Lin Ming didn’t have the slightest idea what to expect, or what would happen. He only knew that Mugu Buyu would be an exceedingly tough opponent. Although this could be called a one-on-one match, the truth was that Lin Ming was up against the equivalent of four powerful enemies.

“Aghh!”

The mummy shrieked, a bone blade in its hand, thrusting straight towards Lin Ming. Its speed was incomparably quick and majestic, it wasn't even much slower than Jiang Lanjian.

The spear in Lin Ming's hand turned, piercing towards the mummy! The power of 10,000 vibrating true essence filaments flooded out. It could be said that as long as Lin Ming's spear scratched an opponent, that opponent would almost die!

It was impossible for that dense bleached white bone blade to stop Lin Ming's spear.

However, at this moment, the bone blade in the mummy's hand exploded, and the four foot long bone blade instantly turned into several hundreds of three inch long bone needles that shot towards Lin Ming. Half of these bone needles shimmered with a glossy green substance – they were poisonous!

The attack closed in. This sudden burst of poisonous hidden weapons could be described as an extremely sinister and malefic move. Lin Ming coldly snorted, and the power of vibration erupted. 10,000 vibrating true essence filaments shot out from the Heavy Profound Soft Spear, each one glowing with an azure light!

Pu pu pu pu pu pu pu pu!

The audience heard a rain of intensive explosive sounds. Those



hundreds of bone needles were completely turned to bone dust by  
that azure true essence!

## Chapter 283 – Puppet Battle Body

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The bone fragments danced in the air, the mummy was blown away by the true essence explosion aftermath!

Lin Ming erupted with true essence. His spear trembled, and he immediately launched Golden Roc Shattering the Void, his figure blurring, his extreme speed like gods and ghosts. He ignored the mummy puppet, and instead rushed straight towards Mugu Buyu!

200 feet passed in a fleeting moment under Lin Ming's feet, he directed his spear towards Mugu Buyu's chest!

Bypass the puppet and oppress the controller; this was the best and most efficient way to deal with a Puppet Master. However, Mugu Buyu was no normal Puppet Master. His close-range combat capabilities were simply abnormal.

In melee combat, would Lin Ming repeat the same mistakes and end up just like Jiang Lanjian? Everyone was thinking this question in their hearts. Jiang Lanjian was a disciple of the Sword Faction, and no one doubted just how strong his close range power was. Yet he had been crushed by Mugu Buyu. Mugu Buyu's defensive power was too amazing, he was nearly invulnerable!

Then, would Lin Ming's spear have any hope of threatening the existence known as Mugu Buyu? The audience's eyes were round, all of them were watching with unblinking eyes, their gazes focused on the scene atop the martial stage.

Seeing Lin Ming rush towards him, the corners of Mugu Buyu's lips tilted up in a nefarious grin. Starting when he was 12 years old, his body had undergone countless transformations with rare and precious materials.

His bones had been mixed with Aged Gold, and heavy darksteel essence had been injected into his flesh. Afterwards, he had soaked in Heavy Gold Water for all seven days of seven weeks, totaling 49 days. This process was repeated six times, and occurred twice a year for three years. This sort of inhuman torture and excruciatingly harrowing pain was not something a normal human could endure without going mad. Because of this transformation, all of his hair had completely fallen off and his skin was dried and withered as if he were at the last breaths of his life. Even though he was young, his appearance was the same as a corpse that was laid out in the sun too long!

One could say that to a certain extent, Mugu Buyu had turned his own body into a living puppet!

The reason that Mugu Buyu was willing to pay such a great price was to rid himself of the Puppet Master's close combat curse. He wanted to become a legendary Puppet Master, and the place where his ambitions began would be at the Seven Profound Valleys Total Faction Martial Meeting!

“Aged Gold Armor!”

Mugu Buyu shouted out, and his bones began to crackle, his entire skeleton making loud popping noises. A layer of metal drilled out of his flesh and poured forth, covering both of his arms.

At this moment, both of Mugu Buyu's hands had turned the color of black gold.

Facing Lin Ming's ferocious attack, Mugu Buyu didn't dodge or evade. Instead, he grabbed Lin Ming's Heavy Profound Soft Spear!

This sudden change caused the entire audience to be shocked, was this still a human body?

Mugu Buyu directly gripped the spearpoint. As long as he could hold onto the spearpoint, he could use his puppet to attack again. Then, Lin Ming would be the same as Jiang Lanjian! He would only have two paths to take. Abandon his spear and retreat, or suffer a grievous wound and be defeated!

However, the moment he took hold of that spear point, his cunningly smiling face froze where it was. In that moment, 10,000 vibrating true essence filaments blasted out like an explosion!

Lin Ming sneered, "Do you really think you are invincible?"

Lin Ming gave a cold humph, and his azure true essence that had fused with the power of the True Dragon rampaged into Mugu Buyu's body. The power of vibration was able to disregard any surface defense, directly destroying the core!

Mugu Buyu gave a miserable cough as he was sent flying back by Lin Ming's vibrating spear!

“What!?”

Seeing this, the audience had extremely stunned expressions. Earlier, Mugu Buyu had been able to easily block Jiang Lanjian’s sword blade, and at that time he hadn’t even used Aged Gold Armor to cover his hands.

Now, the Aged Gold Armor had appeared, and he was still swept away by Lin Ming’s spear. How could this happen?

Mugu Buyu’s face was incomparably grim and fierce as he crawled back up to his feet. His arm was still trembling, and a stream of dark red blood bubbled out from a broken gap in the Golden Aged Armor.

“Mugu Buyu is injured. A single spear was able to wound Mugu Buyu! How did Lin Ming do this?”

“How the hell is Lin Ming’s attack power so abnormally freakish? Could it be that he hasn’t used his true strength until now?”

To most of the audience, although Lin Ming was stronger than Jiang Lanjian, he wasn’t several times stronger. In terms of attack power, Jiang Lanjian was still a disciple from the Sword Faction, and he himself was widely regarded as having extremely powerful attacks. At least, he shouldn’t be too much worse than Lin Ming. But that single spear of Lin Ming’s a moment ago had just completely upended the perception of the audience.

Lin Ming glanced at Mugu Buyu's trembling hand and said, "So it seems even you can bleed."

Mugu Buyu's defensive power had truly surpassed Lin Ming's expectations. Lin Ming had just broken through to the Pulse Condensation period, and he had reached 10,000 filaments of Flow like Silk. Not only that, but his strike had also contained azure true essence and the power of thunder. That vibrating true essence of his had an incomparably formidable destructive power. Once it hit the enemy, it could completely ignore all surface defenses and directly damage the organs and bones!

That is to say, Mugu Buyu's Aged Gold Armor was simply useless against someone like Lin Ming. In this case, after Mugu Buyu had actually taken his attack, his meridians and bones hadn't been ruined.

'This fellow has actually transformed his own meridians and skeleton. His body had almost metamorphosed into a puppet. There truly are unlimited martial paths, everything wonderful and strange is possible!'

"Good! Very good!" Mugu Buyu's expression sank. His brilliant glowing eyes that glared at Lin Ming were just like a vicious beast that was staring at a human it wished to chomp down on. He said, "You really have provoked my ire this time; I will have you pay the price of doing so!"

"Puppet Battle Body!"

Mugu Buyu's skeleton suddenly emitted explosive popping sounds as if all his bones were contorting and snapping within him. The clothes on his body were like rags as they were torn to shreds, and two arms coated in blood stretched forth from his back. In the blink of an eye, Mugu Buyu had turned into a four armed monster!

Lin Ming had seen and experienced many strange and disgusting things in the Southern Wilderness. Yet seeing this scene caused his heart to palpitate, the hairs of his arm to rise, and his scalp to tingle with numbness. This pair of arms didn't look as if they were created by rare materials. Rather, they were real arms that were hacked off and then sewed on!

This Mugu Buyu was a raving madman!

Cha cha cha cha!

Four different weapons were taken out from Mugu Buyu's spatial ring.

His two back arms held a sickle that was over five feet long and a one-inch thin longsword. One front arm held a hammer and the other held a three foot long iron needle that was as thick as a thumb. This iron needle was especially used by the Puppet Faction to nail into a human's chest, so they could fix the human onto a wooden board and facilitate the process of turning them into human puppets. Most of the time this would be done to corpses, but sometimes it was used on the living.

As Mugu Buyu pulled out these four weapons, Lin Ming was already moving. Lin Ming didn't intend to wait for Mugu Buyu to complete this body transfiguring process.

A spear thrust out, and the spearpoint sparked with sizzling electric flashes. The Purple Flood Dragon was especially good at disintegrating Yin energy, and Mugu Buyu's body that was partially composed of corpses was especially heavy in this energy. If this spear struck, Mugu Buyu would absolutely take additional bonus damage.

At this time, Lin Ming suddenly felt a massive traction force take hold of his body. It was as if he were a piece of iron that was attracted to a magnet.

Lin Ming turned around in surprise to see that the giant alligator puppet had opened its giant jaws, and in its mouth a single pure black swirling vortex. This vortex emitted an extremely strong tugging force that pulled down his entire body.

Engulfing power?

What skill was this?

Before Lin Ming could react, he heard a strange sound. A giant silver spiderweb dropped down from the sky towards him. This was the spiderweb that the spider puppet released. After a Puppet Master reached the Essence Integration boundary, the puppets they created could retain the abilities they had in life to a partial degree. For instance, this spider had retained its spiderwebs.



Meanwhile, the mummy puppet also moved. It raised its hand, holding a broken bone blade and thrust straight towards Lin Ming's chest.

At this time, Lin Ming was gripped by the engulfing traction force and was completely unable to dodge or evade. There was a spiderweb in the air and a bone blade on the ground. Lin Ming had been driven into a sure-kill situation!

The audience collectively gasped in shock. Several of the young Zither Faction girls couldn't bear watching this and began to loudly scream.

At this moment, a scintillating bright purple light radiated from Lin Ming, and thick arcs of purple lightning leapt from Lin Ming's body like giant pythons, crashing towards the spiderweb.

Chi Chi Chi!

That spiderweb that far surpassed Sky Worm Silk in tenacity was instantly fired to ashes by the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder.

In that split-second, the mummy flushed at Lin Ming, its bone blade raised high. Lin Ming gave a loud shout; the long spear in his hand pierced forth like a venomous snake!

Puff!

The spear was filled with an unbelievable momentum as it thrust through the mummy's chest. The power of thunder that was especially able to dispel Yin energy burst forth, countless arcs of electricity covering the mummy in a grid of lightning, its body wildly convulsing.

Chi chi chi!

The mummy's entire body was charred black by the power of thunder, fired into a block of charcoal. Suddenly, the mummy opened its wide mouth and spat out a cloud of purple smog.

“Corpse poison?”

The purple smog had just emerged when it was cleanly burned away by the purifying nature of thunder. However, this scene caused Lin Ming's heart to jitter in surprise. The diversionary strength of the engulfing power of the alligator to contain him, combined with the killing potential of the mummy and spider puppet as they circled him. Even on death, the mummy puppet would still release a deadly toxic poison; there were simply layers upon layers of killing moves. If Lin Ming didn't have the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder and azure vibrating true essence that could both defend and attack, then it would be exceedingly difficult for him to ward off so many attacks.

“Die!”

Lin Ming coldly snorted and 10,000 vibrating true essence

filaments merged into the mummy's body where it exploded. The mummy was simply directly blown to smithereens from the spearpoint!

“He destroyed a puppet?”

“So fierce!”

Although it was only destroying a puppet, this achievement was still enough to deeply shock the hearts of everyone present. Up until now, it was as if Mugu Buyu's puppets were immortal. No matter how he let his opponent attack, none of them were able to break apart the puppets' defenses. Even if the puppets were occasionally inadvertently injured, they seemed completely unaware of any damage they took.

The fact that Lin Ming was able to completely destroy a puppet in one strike was enough to cause the audience's eyes to light up in delight. A Puppet Master had a limited number of puppets. Every time a puppet died, the Puppet Master's strength would correspondingly weaken.

On the martial stage, Lin Ming casually shook off his spear, coldly looking towards Mugu Buyu. “Have you finally finished your Puppet Battle Body transformation?”

At this time, Mugu Buyu's entire body was enveloped in a thick carapace, with only four arms sticking out that were covered in Aged Gold Armor. Mugu Buyu was in a very strange position as he supported himself on these four limbs; he looked just like a giant

beetle.

“Hehe, this puppet I created has the strongest defense of all. It is called the Crimson Gold Tortoise. The Crimson Gold Tortoise’s armor can resist penetration from any form of true essence. I confess, your true essence is very strange, it can actually pierce through my Aged Golden Armor and injure me. But now, it is useless against the Crimson Gold Tortoise! As long as I am protected inside, I am invincible! Jejeje!”

Mugu Buyu laughed devilishly. Lin Ming probed the Crimson Gold Tortoise’s armor with his soul force and it appeared just like Mugu Buyu had said. That Crimson Gold Tortoise armor was sealed in some sort of strange force field distortion, cutting off all flows of true essence.

‘The Puppet Faction really has too many secrets!’ Although Lin Ming didn’t understand the principles behind the force field, he was able to guess that it was a mystery that approached the power of Laws. A mere Puppet Faction also had such a powerful legacy; one really couldn’t underestimate any faction, no matter the size.

‘I didn’t think that against Mugu Buyu I would be forced to use my final abilities. If I’m already driven to this stage, how will I deal with Jiang Baoyun?’

# Chapter 284 – Evil Fire God VS Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder

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In the Grand Hall of the Seven Profound Valleys, Shi Zongtian's expression changed. "Scarlet Gold Tortoise... I didn't think that Mugu Buyu would already be able to control the Scarlet Gold Tortoise."

As a Valley Master of the Seven Profound Valleys, Shi Zongtian had some understanding into the cultivation methods and other skills of the Puppet Faction. The Scarlet Gold Tortoise was a defensive puppet, and its armor contained a 'True Essence Force Field'. This was a kind of Law that was even above the Concept of Wind!

A True Essence Force Field was abstruse and enigmatic; someone who wasn't a true genius would never be able to comprehend it. It was one of the most secret inherited legacies of the Puppet Faction. The True Essence Force Field and Essence Integration boundary were together two great supreme heritages of the Puppet Faction.

However, the difficulty in comprehending the True Essence Force Field surpassed even the Essence Integration boundary! Shi Zongtian never would have imagined that Mugu Buyu, at such a young age, would have actually managed to simultaneously comprehend two supreme heritages of the Puppet Faction!

"This is the greatest talent that the Puppet Faction has seen for the last several hundred years! He is even superior to Jiang Baoyun's status in the Sword Faction!"

Shi Zongtian turned to look at the Puppet Faction Great Elder who was sitting in a corner of the Grand Hall. Surprisingly, the old corpse monster's long face actually had an extremely ugly smile. Obviously, he was beyond satisfied with Mugu Buyu.

Seeing Shi Zongtian's eyes on him, the Puppet Faction Great Elder smiled with a 'jejeje' and said, "Buyu has comprehended just a little superficial knowledge of the True Essence Force Field. As for the Scarlet Gold Tortoise, he's barely able to use the lowest level, but... jejeje, although it's only a little superficial knowledge, it's already more than enough to win this match and the next."

The Puppet Faction Great Elder's words were filled with a supreme self-confidence. Indeed, he had reason to be self-confident. The True Essence Force Field was known as the absolute defense among all puppet defenses. As long as he hid within the Scarlet Gold Tortoise, Mugu Buyu would be in an invincible position. Not only that, but Mugu Buyu also had a puppet that was crafted from a peak Houtian realm master. This puppet had been used a single time one year ago, and its strength was already amazing then. Now, a year had passed and its strength was most likely even greater.

A True Essence Force Field coupled together with a peak Houtian master puppet. If both were used in unison, then not even mentioning Lin Ming, even Jiang Baoyun would find it very difficult to defeat Mugu Buyu!

No wonder Mugu Buyu was so arrogant – he had the qualifications to back up his trash talk.

Shi Zongtian casually glanced at the Sword Faction Great Elder and was surprised to see he had a very solemn and grave expression. Apparently, he too was very nervous about Jiang Baoyun and Mugu Buyu's match.

On the martial stage, the mummy puppet had already been demolished by Lin Ming. From within the Scarlet Gold Tortoise, Mugu Buyu released another puppet. This puppet was also in a human shape like the mummy, and its entire body was covered in a bright crimson red armor. This puppet burned with brilliant flames all over, and its aura was valiant and phenomenal. It seemed as if it were a flaming war god that had been born from the ashes of carnage!

Chi chi!

The puppet took a single step on the ground, and the floor tiles directly melted! Its entire body exuded a powerful true essence energy; it was countless times more powerful than the mummy before it!

“It's the Evil Fire God! After the Puppet Faction obliterated the Flame Cult of Grace Venerate Nation, they used the corpse of their founder to create this puppet. That founder was a peak Houtian master!”

“The Evil Fire God is even more powerful than it was a year ago. At that time its body armor didn't have such scalding heat, and it wasn't wreathed in flames.”

The surrounding audience couldn't bear but cry out in alarm and acclaim. Compared to the True Essence Force Field, this peak Houtian realm master puppet was much more frightening and intimidating.

How could Lin Ming still fight against Mugu Buyu?

'So this is the puppet that was manufactured using a peak Houtian realm master...' Lin Ming's eyes narrowed. The puppet that Mugu Buyu made from a peak Houtian master wouldn't be any normal puppet, nor would it be created with any normal materials. This puppet would at least be a top-level Houtian master like Qin Ziya, or even stronger than Qin Ziya. This was absolutely not an enemy that a peak Houtian master from the 36 countries could compare with.

After being made into a puppet, the strength of it was still weakened by a great deal because of the limits of Mugu Buyu's cultivation. Still, it would not be easy to deal with. Coupled with the fact that Mugu Buyu was hidden within the Scarlet Gold Tortoise's True Essence Force Field, and with the skirmishing ability of the giant alligator puppet and spider puppet, the union of these four factors created a perfect offensive and defensive system with no weaknesses at all. They could attack in a 360 degree angle from every single dead spot!

Even Jiang Baoyun was somber as he watched Mugu Buyu set the battle stage. For these last three years, not only did his strength increase by leaps and bounds, but so did Mugu Buyu's! He had gained his own special ability, and Mugu Buyu was also no



exception!

“He’s managed to comprehend the two supreme heritages of the Puppet Faction. He had already gained fame a year ago with the Evil Fire God, and now its strength has increased even more. Lin Ming, I want to see just how you will fight this...”

Jiang Baoyun’s eyes were brilliant as he watched Lin Ming. In this situation, most people had already written off Lin Ming as having any hope of winning. Time and time again Mugu Buyu had revealed power that was formidable beyond anyone’s imagination. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to call him the greatest talent that the Puppet Faction had seen in its 600 year history!

Lin Ming silently gazed at the Evil Fire God.

True essence continuously flooded into the Heretical God Seed, and with a light crackling sound, the mundane-looking purple steel needle jumped into Lin Ming’s palm. This steel needle was only 2 inches long, and there was an image of a Purple Flood Dragon engraved into the needle shaft. This Purple Flood Dragon circled the steel needle nine times, its claws in a hostile and threatening pose!

The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder’s Thunder Soul finally reappeared in the world after a one month-long slumber in the Heretical God Seed!

Although the coiling dragon steel needle contained an incomparably savage and brutal power of thunder, from the

outside, it was impossible to see anything strange. The power of thunder was completely compressed within the steel needle, without even the tiniest bit of thunder power overflowing.

It would be difficult for even a Xiantian master to realize that this steel needle in Lin Ming's hand was entirely constituted from energy. They would only think that it was a solid steel needle.

This was the symbol of high-grade thunder – thunder manifestation!

Energy and mass came from the same origins. Once mass was burned, it would turn into energy. And once energy was highly compressed, it could also similarly evolve and gain a substantive quality.

This was the so-called 'True Essence Manifestation'. The manifestation of thunder was also the same!

Therefore of all those present, no one noticed the purple steel needle appear in Lin Ming's hand except for Mu Qinghong. Even Shi Zongtian wasn't an exception. If Shi Zongtian completely focused his soul force to probe, then he might be able to discover that there was something unusual about the steel needle. But even if he did, he would never imagine that this steel needle of Lin Ming's contained an earth-shattering strength.

"He's finally used his last trump card. This is the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder's Thunder Soul! If it wasn't for Qianyu informing me ahead of time, then I would never have noticed such

a small object.”

Mu Qinghong looked at that coiling dragon steel needle and felt her heart startle. The power of thunder was actually compressed to such a terrifying degree; it was hard to imagine that this was a low-grade earth-step Thunder Soul.

At this time on the martial stage, Mugu Buyu who had released all his firepower laughed with a ‘jejeje’ sound. He said, “Lin Ming, you can take pride in compelling me to use my full strength. Now, meet my strongest attack, Flaming Hell!”

Huuu!

Huuu!

The spider puppet spat out a ball of spider silk and the giant alligator puppet opened its mouth to release its engulfing power. This engulfing power immediately latched onto Lin Ming’s body, blocking him from using his matchless speed.

At the same time, the Evil Fire God drew out a massive burning flame greatsword that blazed in a conflagration of flames. Once this greatsword appeared, layers of heat waves rushed out like a tide; it was as if all the oxygen in the air itself had lit on fire.

Under such a terrifying wave of energy, even the protection barrier around the martial stage began to slightly tremble. And this was only that aftermath of releasing such power. Obviously,

Mugu Buyu's strike would be even stronger!

All of the audience watched with widened eyes, their breath abated. Qin Xingxuan felt as if her heart was caught in her throat, both of her small hands were tightly clasped together, knuckles white.

How could Lin Ming stop such a formidable strike? Mugu Buyu was absolutely one of the cruelest and most ruthless juniors of his generation, one only had to look at Jiang Lanjian as an example. Although the Total Faction Martial Meeting didn't allow murder, what if it happened accidentally? Or what if there was an irreversibly serious injury that crippled Lin Ming for life?

Aware of these possibilities, Qin Xingxuan's palms were cold with sweat.

At this moment, the Evil Fire God moved. It brandished the flaming greatsword in its hands and chopped down at Lin Ming. It was as if space was torn apart, leaving nothing but endless red fire dancing in the sky!

In that moment, even the referee elder had begun to revolve true essence within his entire body, maintaining 120% vigilance. He was ready to move out and rescue Lin Ming at any time. If such a rare talent like him were to be ruined on the martial stage, then that would be an immeasurable loss.

Weng weng weng!

The air trembled, the greatsword howled, and a roaring inferno of flames ascended to the heavens! As for Lin Ming who was bathed in the flames, his eyes were closed tight and his mind entered a deep concentrated state.

His soul had already long penetrated into the flame, controlling each flicker of fire energy and sending it flowing into his heart.

‘This power of fire is actually more dominant than the Abyssal Flames, and yet there is no Flame Essence controlling it. Instead, it’s supported by nine Hollow Flame Essences. This truly is an inconceivable method, to have a single body contain nine Hollow Flame Essences, and yet controlling them so they do not conflict with each other. Is this an ability that only a puppet can have?’

The power of fire didn’t have the support of an eternal Flame Essence backing it. Because of this, it was easily controlled by the Heretical God Seed. Lin Ming simply didn’t need to fear this attack at all. His entire body surged with true essence as all of it was poured into the coiling dragon steel needle.

Lin Ming flicked his finger!

Kacha!

A three feet thick purple beam of light shot straight into the highest skies, impacting the heavens. It was as if the nine heavens had sent down heavenly tribulation to the world. The inestimable highly compressed brutal power of thunder completely broke out from the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder! Thunder clapped,

giant purple electric snakes danced wildly!

The power of thunder and the power of flame met, rotating together. Even without Lin Ming's deliberate manipulation, these two extremely volatile and dangerous energies underwent a similar fusion like Thunderfire Annihilation; they blew up in a titanic explosion!

Bang!

The terrifying power of thunder wantonly surged out in all directions, creating waves of radiant reddish purple shockwaves that lashed out everywhere, falling all over the curtains of light that formed the protective array formation.

With the terrifying explosion contained within a fully enclosed space, the protective light curtains instantly and violently trembled as they expanded outwards from the blast. With a 'ka ka ka' sound, cracks began to appear in the protective barrier, rapidly spreading out like a spiderweb.

At that moment, the entire protective array formation completely shattered!

Lin Ming had already been expecting this. His feet moved and he immediately launched Golden Roc Shattering the Void to rapidly retreat. With the support of the Heretical God Force, the highly compressed azure true essence thickly wrapped around him, protecting the vital areas of his body.

But as for the peak Houtian Evil Fire God puppet, how could it have the same awareness that Lin Ming did? It had stood in the near center of the explosion. Under the mighty force of that terrifying energy, its armor burst apart and its body cracked all over, deep fissures appearing throughout!

“What!?”

“How is this possible!?”

Whether it was the audience, the elders at the Grand Hall, Jiang Baoyun, Jiang Lanjian, or anyone else, they were all completely shocked as they saw the Evil Fire God destroyed. They had thought that after Mugu Buyu had taken out his strongest puppet, the Evil Fire God, and created a perfect attack system, that he had already won. None of them ever imagined that with this single strike of Lin Ming’s, that seemingly all-powerful Evil Fire God collapsed apart on the spot!

## Chapter 285 – Unstoppable

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The intensity of the explosion was too strong. Lin Ming's clothes were torn in many places, hanging off his body like rags. He had various injuries that ranged from mild to severe, but none of them were life threatening. If it wasn't for the endless tenacity of his azure true essence and the fact that his own body's defensive capabilities were so powerful, then he would have been in a pitiful state after taking such an attack.

As for Mugu Buyu, his defensive power was much stronger than Lin Ming's. Still, with his main body hidden in the much less mobile Scarlet Gold Tortoise puppet, he was in a much more distressed and embarrassed state than Lin Ming. Under that violent detonation of energy, he and the Scarlet Gold Tortoise had been both sent flying backwards, smashing against the edge of the arena, and falling down like a turtle that was flipped over. Even the weapons in his hands had fallen out.

In the middle of the martial stage, the tiles that had just been repaired yesterday were completely blasted apart by the terrifying explosive force.

As for the Evil Fire God, its entire body was covered in fissures and cracks, and it seemed more dead than alive.

The other two puppets were also broken by the explosion. The giant alligator's tail had broken, and the spider puppet had lost five of its eight long legs.



The audience gasped repeatedly, “The Evil Fire God is ruined?”

“I can hardly believe my eyes. A year ago, I personally witnessed the power of Mugu Buyu. At that time, the Evil Fire God could almost be considered better than the Deputy House Master of the Jade Bamboo Nation’s Seven Profound Martial House! And now a year later, the Evil Fire God has a red suit of armor. Its strength is most likely much greater than it was before, and yet it was defeated in a single move... no... it’s better to say that it was demolished.”

“This is too terrifying! Even the protective barrier shattered apart, is this really a human?”

“What attack did Lin Ming use? Was it purely the power of thunder?”

Everyone present had some level of cultivation. In the instant of the explosion, they had been able to sense an incomparably strong power of thunder. Not only that, but a thick purple column of light had impacted into the skies, piercing the heavens. This was something that anyone could see as long as they weren’t blind. It was just that no one believed that Lin Ming was actually able to unleash a power of thunder that could generate such catastrophic destruction.

At this moment, the sky resounded with claps of thunder. As the audience looked up, they could actually see flashes of lightning in the clouds above; it was as if a thundercloud had magically appeared on a rainy summer day.

Without a doubt, this phenomenon was created by the pillar of lightning that had shot up into the sky a moment ago. The power of thunder was actually able to break through the heavens and live amongst the clouds, the vibrant intensity of this power of thunder was simply amazing!

Mugu Buyu finally managed to roll over and right himself from the pile of rubble he was in. His deep eyes looked at Lin Ming in disbelief, his lips vigorously twitching.

This is impossible! How could he possibly have such a powerful attack!?

Ka ka ka!

With a light crackling sound, several pieces of the Scarlet Gold Tortoise's shell began to fall off. This was obviously caused by the trauma of the impact a moment ago, making cracks appear!

“Even the Scarlet Gold Tortoise was damaged!”

Mugu Buyu let out a heavy gasp. The True Essence Force Field was a legacy that was on par with the power of Laws, and yet it still hadn't been able to completely block Lin Ming's strike!

What sort of terrifying move was this!? Even a peak Houtian powerhouse couldn't compare!

‘To use such an attack, this baby boy must have used some sort of secret technique, there is no way that he could use it again! My True Essence Force Field hasn’t broken, there is no need for me to be afraid of that attack again...’ As Mugu Buyu thought this, his rapidly beating heart was able to settle down.

‘So many of my puppets were destroyed, that even includes my Evil Fire God! I will surely make you pay!’

Mugu Buyu clenched his jaw, the corners of his lips curving up in a vicious smile. To a Puppet Master, every puppet was extremely precious and valuable. The spider puppet and giant alligator puppet had been seriously damaged, and the Evil Fire God was turned to scrap. The Scarlet Gold Tortoise also had minor damage. This succession of losses caused Mugu Buyu’s heart to feel as if it were dripping blood.

The manufacturing of a puppet required one to invest a massive amount of time, effort, and all sorts of rare and precious materials. Mugu Buyu simply couldn’t afford to lose his puppets, especially the Evil Fire God. Mugu Buyu had paid the price for these puppets, and now they were nearly ruined by Lin Ming. It was just like breaking his hands and feet at the same time.

Mugu Buyu grabbed another four different weapons, glaring at Lin Ming as if he wished to shred him into a million pieces.

At this point, Mugu Buyu’s eyes jumped. He saw Lin Ming flex his fingers, and a purple steel needle appeared in his palm, spinning around.

Mm?

‘A moment ago, did this boy take out that steel needle to send out that terrifying attack?’

Mugu Buyu couldn’t confirm his suspicious. Looking at that purple steel needle, it didn’t seem as if there was anything special about it.

‘Regardless of whether not that horrifying attack was caused by that steel needle, it’s impossible for him to launch it multiple times. There is no need for me to fear him!’

As Mugu Buyu thought this, he drove out all the hesitation and dread that had built up within his heart. He grasped the four weapons in his hand, his concentration at the limit. As long as he saw this steel needle fly out, he would immediately cut it down!

In the Grand Hall, Shi Zongtian saw this coiling dragon steel needle reappear once more. He was stunned to the point of immediately standing from his chair.

“This... this is!?!?”

Shi Zongtian naturally had extraordinary eyesight. When he first saw Lin Ming take out this coiling dragon steel needle, he didn’t really think that it was worth paying much attention to. But this time he deliberately used his soul force to probe. Just as his soul

force touched the surface of the steel needle, a terrifying power of thunder that was compressed to an outrageous degree bounced back!

“Just what the... it can actually reflect my soul force probing?” Shi Zongtian was shocked. He was an extreme Xiantian master! And yet this steel needle that was taken out by a junior had actually managed to force back his perception. This mighty power of thunder... could that steel needle possibly be a manifestation of thunder energy that had actually substantialized into pure thunder matter!?!?

Shi Zongtian was about to continue investigating, but at this time, Lin Ming flicked his finger, and that coiling dragon steel needle was sent flying!

Mugu Buyu was at the end of the line, he was in a critical situation. He had a throbbing premonition that this steel needle wasn't simple at all. The four weapons in his hands were all the highest high-grade human-step treasures. Not only that, but they had been inscribed with special puppet symbols that channeled the true essence within his body. They were weapons that were tailor-made for him to use.

Mugu Buyu had paid a great price for these special top quality treasures in his hand. He couldn't believe that with these treasures, he wouldn't be able to block a small steel needle. Lin Ming was a rare genius, but in the end he was still a common martial artist from the 36 countries. How could he have anything of a grade that surpassed these treasures in his hand?

“Break for me!” Mugu Buyu cried out, and he flourished all four treasure weapons to cut down that coiling dragon steel needle!

A sickle, longsword, iron nail, and hammer, all four of these weapons were thousands of times larger than that tiny coiling dragon steel needle. The clash between them would be completely out of proportion, just like a elephant against an ant. Even though everyone realized that Lin Ming’s strength was unfathomably deep, none of them believed that this steel needle could explode with a terrifying power.

However, as Mugu Buyu’s four treasures simultaneously struck the coiling dragon steel needle, a completely unexpected scene occurred!

Bang!

Thunder sounded on the ground, and a terrifying purple ray of light shot into the sky! Hundreds of thick electrical snakes wantonly coiled in the air, crazily twisting around. Mugu Buyu who was hiding in the Crimson Gold Tortoise was sent flying back, just like a ball that was hit by a human expert!

The entire audience was stunned, how could this happen?

Before the audience had a chance to react, an urgent voice suddenly cried out, “Watch out for the explosive shockwaves!”

That array formation was supposed to protect the audience by

containing anything within the martial stage. However, that defensive barrier had already shattered apart in the last attack. Without the protection of the curtains of light, the purple explosion mixed with arcs of terrifying lightning savagely surged out into the audience!

The disciples nearest to the martial stage cried out in alarm. They immediately forced all of their true essence to protect their body, bracing themselves against the terrifying explosive shockwaves and lightning. They were not weak, but even so, after being struck by the purple energy waves, they felt their blood tumbling within them and their whole body go numb.

Several martial artists whose cultivation was only at the Bone Forging stage were even thrown backwards, wounded, vomiting blood.

“Heavens, that is just too terrifying. The true essence aftermath actually has this kind of power; just how terrible would it be directly facing it?”

In the contestant waiting area, Zhang Yanzhao had taken out his saber to resist the true essence shockwaves. Feeling the inestimable energy within, he could only ruefully smile, muttering to himself, “How laughable of me. Although my strength isn’t enough to reach the top five, in terms of attack power I foolishly believed I was far above everyone else. But not compared to Lin Ming. Even if I used the strongest move of the Blood King’s Triple Murder, I can’t even begin to match up to this.”

After the shockwaves of the explosion passed by, the audience

was in total chaos. At this time, everyone couldn't help but wonder, just what had happened to Mugu Buyu, who had been directly struck by this?

Suddenly, everyone turned their heads to look. They saw that Mugu Buyu's Tortoise Shell had already smashed into a stone pillar, his entire puppet body covered in rubble, motionless.

Seeing this, everyone's throats fiercely twitched as they gulped over and over again. Such a terrifying attack, even if Mugu Buyu had the defensive power of the Scarlet Gold Tortoise, the impact alone would have been enough to wound him.

This was too fearful.

With the sound of rolling rocks, Mugu Buyu finally crawled out from the rubble. It had to be said that the Scarlet Gold Tortoise's defensive power was truly resilient. Even under the second attack of the coiling dragon steel needle, it hadn't exploded into bits, only a massive number of cracks had appeared on the surface.

But even though the Scarlet Gold Tortoise had an amazing defensive power, it still couldn't defend against the electric shocks or the impact damage from being flung away. Mugu Buyu was scorched black all over his body, and his organs felt as if they were dislocated.

Ka ka ka...



As more of the Scarlet Gold Tortoise pieces crumbled off, the True Essence Force Field was teetering on a very precarious situation.

Mugu Buyu was frightened out of his wits. This Lin Ming was simply an abnormal monster, that sort of inhuman attack could actually be launched in bursts!

Although the second attack was much weaker, it could definitely match or even exceed an all-out attack from a peak Houtian master.

If he was struck again, he feared that his Scarlet Gold Tortoise would be finished. If this happened, then Mugu Buyu's combat effectiveness would sink to the pits. His great losses would simply be unimaginable.

Mugu Buyu's eyes were bloodshot as he sent a withering glare at Lin Ming, as if he only wished to swallow him. He could only gnash his teeth and finally say, "I admit defeat!"

A Puppet Master had many different forms of attacks, and could form a three-dimensional attack system from all facets. Compared to an ordinary martial artist, they had many advantages. But the disadvantages were obvious too. Once a puppet was damaged, it was very troublesome to repair. They weren't like normal martial artists that could just eat some healing medicine, rest for a few days and be completely healed.

"Mugu Buyu actually admitted defeat..."

“Too terrifying. Lin Ming was actually able to force Mugu Buyu into this situation. I think that even Jiang Baoyun will lose against Lin Ming!”

“I don’t think Jiang Baoyun has any hope, he seems to be around Mugu Buyu’s level...”

A Seven Profound Valleys disciple slapped his thigh, and said with some annoyance, “If I knew about all this earlier, I would have bet on Lin Ming to win! Even if I only placed down ten true essence stones, I would have become a rich man!”

# Chapter 286 – Closing The Curtains On The Final Act

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Many people regretted that they hadn't placed bets on Lin Ming to win. They all had limited foresight. When Jiang Baoyun had displayed his amazing strength to the crowd, they thought that Jiang Baoyun had a high chance of winning. Then when Mugu Buyu had revealed his Essence Integration boundary and True Essence Force Field, they thought that Mugu Buyu would win.

Now, Mugu Buyu had been completely eliminated by Lin Ming, so they in turn transferred all their support to Lin Ming.

A voice coldly said, "The battle hasn't been fought, no one knows the outcome. Perhaps Lin Ming might not defeat Jiang Baoyun!"

"Mm?"

"Mugu Buyu's most terrifying aspect lies in his defensive power. Lin Ming's attack power had exceeded even a peak Houtian master, so he was able to suppress Mugu Buyu. But Jiang Baoyun is different. Jiang Baoyun's most terrifying aspect lies in his attack power and speed. If Lin Ming's attack can't reach Jiang Baoyun, then the loser will absolutely be Lin Ming!"

As the person said this, everyone began to feel that this was a very rational and justified reasoning.

Among masters, they were often able to equally restrain each

other in different aspects. Mugu Buyu and his puppet were very slow. To Lin Ming, he was a perfect target.

But Jiang Baoyun was different.

His sword speed reached the pinnacle!

His movement speed reached the pinnacle!

His attack strength reached the pinnacle!

He was a completely different type of master than Mugu Buyu.

Like this, the final result of that battle became confusing once again...

As the crowd discussed amongst themselves, Lin Ming was also playing out the battle between him and Jiang Baoyun in his imagination. He once had full confidence in himself, but until now, he still hadn't seen or experienced Jiang Baoyun's true and total strength, and he didn't know the cause for Jiang Baoyun's confidence.

“It's a pity that my Flame Essence is too small and weak right now. Otherwise, I could combine thunder and fire – it would be much easier to deal with Jiang Baoyun...”

The Flame Essence within Lin Ming's Heretical God Seed was

much more formidable than it was in the past. However, it didn't have an enhancement in its essential nature; it remained the lowest of the low-grade human-step Flame Essences.

After recently using some fires from another Flame Essence to build up his own, along with collecting some information, Lin Ming was able to summarize many experiences and thoughts he had.

Normally, for a martial artist's Flame Essence (such as the Southern Wilderness Fire Worm Shaman's Eternal Flame, or the Refiner Faction Huo Yanluo's Abyssal Flame) once its grade was decided, it would never be able to be promoted to a higher grade. For instance, once a medium-grade human-step Flame Essence was born as such, it could never again be improved.

Even if one collected all sorts of rare and precious materials to enhance it, it would only cause the Flame Essence to grow stronger within Flame Essences of the same level; it would never have a qualitative evolution.

It was just like raising a dog. One could feed a dog good meat and good bones, allowing it to grow stronger every day. But no matter how strong this dog became, it would never become a tiger.

A higher-grade Flame Essence was only a bit different. For instance, an earth-step Flame Essence would start off as a mewling tiger cub. After first acquiring it and not having fed it anything, it would naturally be inferior to a good grown-up dog. But in the end, a tiger was a tiger. Even if it was fed rotten meat every day, it would eventually grow up and become a beast that a

mere dog could not deal with.

As for Lin Ming's current Flame Essence, even if placed among the dogs, it would be the weakest and most pathetic puppy of all. Yet the difference was that it could continually grow, and even change its essential nature. In the future, it could become a tiger or transform into a dragon. When that happened, its true terrifying strength would burst out.

If he wanted his Flame Essence to have a qualitative change, it could only happen by devouring other Flame Essences.

As for everything else, even the highest fire-attribute materials like the feathers of the Vermillion Bird could only increase the strength of the Flame Essence within its grade; they couldn't cause the Flame Essence to be promoted to another level.

Because of this, Lin Ming had kept and hadn't used most of the Vermillion Bird feathers that he had obtained by tricking Mu Qianyu's Saint Beast mount, the cute Little Flame.

As Lin Ming was thinking about Jiang Baoyun's combat strength and where his weaknesses could be, in the Grand Hall, several of the Seven Profound Valleys' elders were watching Lin Ming and talking about him.

That battle earlier had simply given them too great a shock.

It wasn't just Shi Zongtian, but also several other elders who had

noticed the coiling dragon steel needle. They realized that it wasn't a true material object, but rather something that was condensed and formed by pure energy.

The Sword Faction Great Elder's deep eyes flashed. He lowered his head as if he were hesitating for a moment, and then slowly said, "If this old man hasn't misread with his dull eyes, then that should be some sort of instrument that was congealed from pure thunder origin energy... this sort of thing isn't something that even a thunder-attribute Xiantian realm powerhouse could have. It's unbelievable that a Pulse Condensation boy can actually have this sort of thing..."

"Elder Jiang, don't tell me you believe that little brat Lin Ming was actually able to condense that steel needle? What a joke and a half!" The Zither Faction Sovereign coldly snorted, obviously viewing Elder Jiang's opinion with utter disdain. "It is impossible for a Pulse Condensation period child to condense a pure energy weapon, even if they were at the height of all talent! That requires an incomparably thick true essence to condense, and also a heaven gifted thunder origin energy fusion compatibility. He would need to purify the thunder-attribute energy and then condense that origin energy into a weapon. Lin Ming's talent is barely enough, but he absolutely does not have the required true essence! If he does, then he can just forget about the tournament and come right up here; I will give my position to him!"

The Zither Faction's old woman said all this in a chilling tone. She continuously beat Lin Ming's face, diminishing and dismissing him. She really held no love, or even had a decent impression towards Lin Ming.

This was because no matter what faction Lin Ming joined, it was impossible that he would join her Zither Faction. If he joined another faction, then that was equivalent to gaining another powerful rival. This was something that she understood in her heart, and thus her impression of Lin Ming continued to worsen.

Elder Jiang faintly smiled. Lin Ming would not join the Zither Faction, but there was a high chance that he would join the Sword Faction. The sword and spear and many similarities that could help each other, and although Lin Ming couldn't practice the sword arts, there were still many true essence revolving cultivation methods that he could use. Moreover, the Sword Faction had the most abundant resources.

Like this, the Sword Faction would have three great talents in Jiang Baoyun, Jiang Lanjian, and Lin Ming. Thinking this, the smile on Elder Jiang's face grew wider and wider. He stroked his beard as he said, "Even if it wasn't condensed by Lin Ming, it's also very extraordinary that he can control a Xiantian level origin energy weapon."

"It's only good luck, nothing more! He just hit the jackpot when he stumbled into some Xiantian master's inheritance! With this opportunity, he would naturally be able to make leaps and bounds in a short period of time. But after this period, all of it will disappear."

Hearing the cynical taunts of the Zither Faction Sovereign, Mu Qinghong suddenly coldly interjected, "There are countless lucky opportunities that can be found in the Sky Spill Continent. However, there are only a few people that can obtain them. What



others lack is not luck, but ability, courage, and wisdom!”

Mu Qinghong was well aware of just how Lin Ming managed to come by his Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. He had rushed to the summit of Thundercrash Mountain with just a Bone Forging cultivation. He even snuck into the Flood Dragon’s lair and managed to obtain the Magnetic Birthstone. This courage and fearless bravery was not something that could come from any average person.

This was also a point that Mu Qianyu had extremely admired in Lin Ming. There were countless talents and geniuses within the Sky Spill Continent. However, the number of true high-level powerhouses was actually very low in number. This was not because everyone else had insufficient talent, but because they lacked wisdom, understanding, perception, and an incomparably firm heart of martial arts.

Mu Qinghong had a lofty status. Hearing her say these words of praise, the Zither Faction old woman didn’t immediately respond. Shi Zongtian smiled, mediating between them, “What Fairy Maiden Qinghong meant is that opportunities only present themselves to those that are prepared. Every lucky chance has an accompanying risk that corresponds to the rewards! There is a fine line between obtaining this lucky chance and dying a beggar’s death.”

As the elders discussed these matters, several other matches had already passed on stage.

Two masters that also represented the pinnacle of attack power

faced each other in Huo Yanluo and Zhang Yanzhao. Huo Yanluo's Flame Essence turned out to be superior, breaking apart Zhang Yanzhao's Blood King's Triple Murder. This caused the audience to exclaim in surprise. The Abyssal Flame's power was truly terrifying. If it wasn't for the lightning attack that Lin Ming had released, then the Abyssal Flame would be the most powerful move of this year's Total Faction Martial Meeting.

After that was Fang Qi against Mugu Jirong.

After Fang Qi had lost his Golden Light Array Flag, he could have been considered at the lowest spot of the 11 people. However, Mugu Jirong wasn't much better. When he fought against Huo Yanluo, three of his puppets had been burnt to cinders by Huo Yanluo, and as a result his strength had greatly decreased.

These two could be said to be comrades-in-suffering, fellow losers that had lost a great deal of their strength. After a tough battle, Mugu Jirong was finally able to defeat Fang Qi. This victory had basically established that Mugu Jirong would be tenth, and Fang Qi would be eleventh.

The 23rd round was Zhang Yanzhao against Huan Xiaodie. Most of the crowd favored Zhang Yanzhao and were more optimistic of his chances. However, what happens during a match can often surprise. Huan Xiaodie created illusion after illusion and was able to cause Zhang Yanzhao to strike empty air. Afterwards, he was defeated by Huan Xiaodie's counterattack.

Like this, eighth and ninth place were also settled. Zhang Yanzhao had taken his Blood Wave Saber to participate in this

Total Faction Martial Meeting and had only reached ninth place. This result was much worse than what the Zhang Family elders had hoped for. It could only be said that this year's Total Faction Martial Meeting simply had too many extreme talents.

After the 24th round ended, the referee team decided to temporarily postpone the matches between Lin Ming, Qin Wuxin, Jiang Lanjian, Jiang Baoyun, Mugu Buyu, and Ouyang Ming for three days. The other contestants' matches would carry on as usual.

Because these six people had amazing combat strength, the martial stage's protective array formation had to be repaired and strengthened. Also, Jiang Lanjian had been severely wounded and Mugu Buyu's puppets had been seriously damaged, greatly decreasing both of their combat strength. If the matches continued, it would be impossible for them to display their full potential, thus the decision was made to delay the matches.

Lin Ming was indifferent to this decision. In the top 11, there was only one person he hadn't yet fought, and that was Jiang Baoyun.

This would be his final battle.

For three days, Lin Ming was specifically arranged by the Seven Profound Valleys to stay in a quiet room that was built over an opening in the land pulse.

The feature of the opening in the land pulse was that there was origin energy that gushed forth from the ground. The heaven and

earth origin energy here was twice as rich compared to other places in the Seven Profound Valleys. As for comparing it to Sky Fortune Kingdom, the difference was simply like heaven and earth.

At the same time, what Lin Ming ate was spiritual fruits and vegetables. These foods contained rich heaven and earth origin energy that was even purer than what was served at Desert Flower Hall. Lin Ming suspected that the food he ate was valued at over 100 true essence stones. If this was converted to gold, that would be 100,000 gold taels! To eat 100,000 gold taels in a single sitting was mind boggling. The entire yearly expenses of the Crown Prince's offices wouldn't even be able to cover a few meals. Lin Ming just couldn't imagine how much gold was being spent on food.

But since the food was supplied free of charge, Lin Ming naturally obliged and opened his belt and belly wide to eat as much as he could. Since the Seven Profound Valleys had plundered so many resources, he ate with a clear and satisfied conscience.

In these three days, Lin Ming didn't go out. He stayed in his room meditating and cultivating. Under the support of the ethereal martial intent, the Blue Miracle Pill efficacy and the heaven and earth origin energy he got from eating the spiritual food were completely absorbed by him. Slowly, his early Pulse Condensation period cultivation became increasingly consolidated.

These three days quietly passed.

As Lin Ming sat in his room after a full night of mediating, his

eyes slowly opened. In that instant, his pupils flashed with thunder.

Today was the true final day of battle. As for Lin Ming, he only had a single match, and that would be his battle against Jiang Baoyun.

# Chapter 287 – Blue And Black Twin Swords

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It was early morning. The sun had risen from the east, scattering the murky gray mist that shrouded the land. The entire Seven Profound Valleys was seething with utter excitement.

Because there were only a handful of matches left for today, there was plenty of time left. Therefore the first match was scheduled to start in the late morning.

Even so, at the dawn of day, the entire martial square was already densely packed to the point at which it was even difficult to walk through.

In these last three days, everything except for the last round of the tournament had been finished, including the second tier and the third tier. Ranks 100 to 200 had already been decided through points attained in the Ten Thousand Killing Array.

Qin Xingxuan had finally managed to attain rank 169, and Ling Sen attained rank 72. These two results were already considered excellent for martial artists from the 36 countries.

Sky Fortune Kingdom had three people who managed to reach the top 200. Qin Ziya was simply ecstatic with the euphoria of this success.

In particular Lin Ming; the pleasant surprise that this young boy had given him was too great. After defeating Mugu Buyu, Lin Ming had high hopes of becoming the champion! Once Lin Ming came in

first, Qin Ziya would be able to obtain the Heaven Opening Pill that he had been longing for in his dreams!

Countless martial artists pursued the Xiantian realm for their entire lives. Even Qin Ziya, who had a simple personality and was often indifferent, was extremely excited at the prospect of officially stepping into the Xiantian realm!

However, Qin Ziya was clear that the Xiantian realm was most definitely the end of his martial arts road. Among the peak Houtian masters, he was among the top, and it was difficult for anyone in the Houtian realm to stand shoulder to shoulder with him in comparison. But after he reached the Xiantian realm, he would only be the most ordinary of Xiantian martial artists, the kind that were often surpassed by the most talented geniuses.

But even so, Qin Ziya was satisfied with that road. Who knew how many martial artists in the Sky Spill Continent had been stuck at that Xiantian bottleneck? They had been unable to break through their entire lives, and would finally die with their dreams unfulfilled.

When Lin Ming reached the square, he saw an elderly man in blue kindly smiling at him, a longsword on his back. As Lin Ming saw this elder, his was startled. This old man was just casually standing there, but it seemed as if there was an invisible sword aura floating around him, able to cut apart all.

Extreme Xiantian master?

Lin Ming's heart jumped. An extreme Xiantian master was very rare, even in the Seven Profound Valleys. There were many faction Sovereigns that hadn't been able to reach the extreme Xiantian realm.

“Lin Ming.” The blue-clothed elder smiled kindly at Lin Ming as if they shared a close rapport with each other. This was in sharp contrast against the sharp sword aura that surrounded him.

“Senior.” Lin Ming bowed in respect.

“After the tournament ends, make sure you come to the Absolute Sword Peak's Sword Terrace to look for me. This old man's name is Jiang Wuji.”

Jiang Wuji... Lin Ming sucked in a breath of cold air. This old man really was the Sword Faction Sovereign!

Although Lin Ming took pride in his status and abilities, with existences like Jiang Wuji, he still needed to look up to them in respect.

“Of course.” Lin Ming replied in deference. He was able to faintly guess what Jiang Wuji wanted from him. Since this was a personal invitation from the Sword Faction Sovereign, it was naturally impossible for him to reject.

At this time, a hearty laughter sounded out, “Jiang Wuji, you're quite a crafty one.”



When this voice sounded out, it seemed as if it was far away. But right after, it had already entered into his ears. Lin Ming turned his head and saw a handsome man in a white robe walking over to him. He was several hundred feet away, but crossed this distance in only a few steps, as if the road underneath him was shortening.

This was also an extreme Xiantian master!

Lin Ming's eyes jumped. He didn't know how many extreme Xiantian masters there were in the Seven Profound Valleys, but he could tell that they were all characters at the Sovereign level. If such a figure were placed in the Sky Fortune Kingdom, even the emperor would have to be cautious around them. To be more precise, any emperor of the mortal world would not even have the qualifications to see them.

“The tournament hasn't even ended, and yet your Sword Faction is already thinking of snatching away this young talent? Lin Ming is a spear master. If he enters your Sword Faction, there is nothing he can do. If it's like that, it's much better for him to join my Acacia Faction!” The white-clothed man smiled as he said this, then very casually patted Lin Ming's shoulder as if he was showing a great deal of affection and fondness.

The white-clothed man's lewd smile was completely out of character with his vaunted status.

“My Acacia Faction. Hehe, do you understand just what benefits you'll have if you join my Acacia Faction? There are thousands of

beauties for you to freely choose from. If you take a fancy towards anyone, you can just carry them away. My Acacia Faction can satisfy any taste that you have. Young girls that are 14, young girls that are 18, or even several dozen years. We have ripe, mature women that are rich in experience and techniques of all kinds. Although it sounds a bit old, you'll never be able to tell them apart from a twenty year old. As long as you desire, you can obtain any type you wish for! We have mothers with daughters, twins, quadruplets, sisters, everything you can hope to find! Not only that, but Lin Ming, with your status, these girls will fall over each other to climb into your bed. They will rack their brains and do anything they can think of to please you. This is the ultimate life that a man can live!"

Hearing the Acacia Faction Sovereign's bawdy laughter, Lin Ming was dumbfounded. If it wasn't for this fellow's cultivation, then it would have been hard for Lin Ming to think of this man as a Sovereign. But as Lin Ming remembered just what sort of place the Acacia Faction was, and that it was a faction that focused on carnal cultivation methods, he realized this made sense.

"Mm? Aren't you interested?" Seeing Lin Ming have no reaction, the Acacia Faction Sovereign's eyes were somewhat strange. He was likely suspecting that Lin Ming had a problem with his body, or maybe he had a different sexual orientation.

Lin Ming was speechless. He finally said, "Thank you Sovereigns for your kind thoughts, but joining a sect is very important, and many matters are at stake. I honestly haven't given it much thought yet."

According to the customs of Sky Fortune Kingdom, Lin Ming had finally reached the age where one would often discuss marriage. It was impossible for Lin Ming to not desire a woman, after all, he was a young boy with hormones. But to him, the Acacia Faction's cultivation methods were simply too low-grade, and he could never use women to cultivate something like the 'Divine Acacia Power'.

"Haha, of course, when discussing such things, naturally you need to further consider. After this tournament ends, come to my Acacia Faction if you have the spare time. I have a few gifts prepared for you." The Acacia Faction Sovereign revealed a lascivious smile that was easy for any man to understand. Lin Ming could imagine just what these so-called 'gifts' were.

Lin Ming didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

With the appearance of the Acacia Faction Sovereign, Jiang Wuji kept a calm and placid expression. There wasn't much harmony or good will between the largest factions of the Seven Profound Valleys, the Sword Faction and Acacia Faction. One was a self-proclaimed righteous sect that followed the orthodox ways, whilst the other was an evil sect that focused on fulfilling one's earthly desires. Both of their ideals ran counter to each other; it was simply impossible for them to get along.

As the Sovereigns of the two largest factions within the Seven Profound Valleys coldly stared at each other, the tournament had already gotten underway. There were only six contestants for today's matches; Lin Ming, Qin Wuxin, Jiang Lanjian, Jiang Baoyun, Mugu Buyu, and Ouyang Ming.

These six individuals were fated to be the top six of this year's Total Faction Martial Meeting.

The first to go onstage was Mugu Buyu. He had already switched to a new puppet. Repairing a badly damaged puppet was a complicated and tedious matter that took a great deal of time. Thus Mugu Buyu could only take out a spare puppet. Of course, its power was clearly inferior to the precious combination.

However, even though he was at a disadvantage, his fighting strength was still surprisingly high. In his match against Qin Wuxin, Mugu Buyu was able to easily win because Qin Wuxin's zither music was simply unable to break through his True Essence Force Field.

Afterwards, Ouyang Ming fought Jiang Lanjian. Jiang Lanjian's attacks were swift and sharp, but in the end he was unable to overcome Ouyang Ming, and was defeated.

Like this, the fifth and sixth place ranks were decided. Qin Wuxin was fifth, and Jiang Lanjian was sixth.

Next was the struggle for the top four spots of this tournament.

Ouyang Ming against Jiang Baoyun.

This battle had aroused a great amount of interest amongst the audience. This was because they once thought that this battle

would be the ultimate showdown of this year's Total Faction Martial Meeting.

This was the first time that Jiang Baoyun had drawn his sword, causing everyone to be greatly surprised. Jiang Baoyun's sword case on his back held two swords. One was blue, and the other was black. Both swords were slender and long. The blue sword was covered in teal scales, and it had a chilling luster to it, shining with a cold light.

As for that black sword, it was inserted into a scabbard. That scabbard seemed to be made of some black stone, it was incomparably strange.

These two swords grabbed everyone's interest. Even Lin Ming was eyeing those swords with great concern. He had a gut feeling that those two swords weren't as simple as they seemed.

As a swordsman, Jiang Baoyun had been able to reach this stage without having taken out his swords. This was enough to illustrate just how terrifying he truly was. Now, the first time he brought out his sword, there were actually two. This caused the audience to be exhilarated.

“Was Jiang Baoyun someone who practiced dual wielding?”

“That's impossible. Our Seven Profound Valleys' Sword Faction only cultivates the single sword. Not only that, but the dual wielding method is simply not the orthodox method. Jiang Baoyun would never do something so trifling and neglect the essential

foundation of the sword path.

A dual swordsman had the advantages of using dual swords. However, a true orthodox swordsman held a single blade as their king. Those swordsmen that pursued the ultimate pinnacle of the sword almost all used a single blade. Of course, in ancient times there was also a legendary swordsman named Wang Chengsheng who had had used the rare dual sword method.

Once the match started, Jiang Baoyun actually didn't take out his black sword. Instead, he only drew his blue sword. The sharp sword light that it released was like a verdant rainbow that fell from the sky. The purple flames that Ouyang Ming released were chopped into bits.

With his sword in hand, Jiang Baoyun's aura had completely changed from before. As soon as the battle with Ouyang Ming started, it became a completely one-sided slaughter. In just ten breaths of time, the match had ended and Ouyang Ming admitted defeat.

Jiang Baoyun placed the blue sword back into his sword case. As for the black sword, he hadn't even touched it.

He had two swords with him, and yet he only used one?

Nobody believed that the second sword in Jiang Baoyun's sword case was there for some fancy decoration. It absolutely contained a terrifying amount of power. The reason that Jiang Baoyun hadn't used it was likely because Ouyang Ming didn't have the

qualifications to force him to.

“Jiang Baoyun should be a dual wielder. Since he has two swords, the second sword should be tied to some special skill that he uses...”

Lin Ming mulled over this. When he looked at Jiang Baoyun, he found it difficult to estimate him. He just always had such a calm confident appearance. Naturally, he also had the ability to be so confident.

The audience was deeply curious as to what Jiang Baoyun’s second sword was. They were looking forward to it being drawn, and were hoping that he would use it against Mugu Buyu. However, they were left in disappointment.

As the referee announced the match between Jiang Baoyun and Mugu Buyu, Jiang Baoyun actually refused to participate.

“Jiang Baoyun, why won’t you fight me?” Mugu Buyu’s mummy face was twisted together, it looked hideously grotesque.

“I do not wish to win like this. Your Evil Fire God is ruined, and your Scarlet Gold Tortoise is in poor condition. As of now, you are not my match.” Jiang Baoyun embraced his sword case, his voice tranquil.

Mugu Buyu ground his bright white teeth together, and sneered as he laughed, “So you pity me. To think that I, Mugu Buyu, would

one day fall from the skies and be reduced to this state, where I am actually pitied by others!”

Although Mugu Buyu loathed Jiang Baoyun, he couldn't help but admit that with his current condition, it was impossible for him to be Jiang Baoyun's match.

Jiang Baoyun said, “There's no need to speak any further. Right now you don't even have the qualifications for me to bring out my Black Crystal Sword. When you've restored yourself to your peak condition, then you can come look for me at the Sword Terrace. At that time, we shall decide who is the winner and who is the loser!”

Thus, Jiang Baoyun and Mugu Buyu's match was put on hold, and Ouyang Ming's position was settled as fourth. There was only one final match left in this tournament, it would decide who was the champion.

Lin Ming against Jiang Baoyun.



# Chapter 288 – The Peak Of All Battles

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The referee team was keenly interested in the final match of Lin Ming and Jiang Baoyun. They decided to let the two of them adjust and restore their conditions to the peak. Before the final match began, the tournament was placed on hold for three hours until lunchtime was finished.

In fact, by this point many people weren't even in the mood for lunch. They remained in their seats, fervently anticipating the upcoming match and discussing amongst themselves.

The common disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys had limited vision on what would truly happen. However, they had an outstanding capacity to fantasize how the match would play out, brainstorming countless ways that Lin Ming and Jiang Baoyun would fight. Even Jiang Baoyun's Black Crystal Sword had had its function and characteristics thoroughly 'researched'. Especially for the disciples of the Refiner Faction, although they were not so good at combat, this was a prime opportunity for them to display their specialized skillsets. They analyzed Jiang Baoyun's Black Crystal Sword from multiple angles and deduced its attributes. If one wasn't aware of the situation, then they would have even thought that these Refiner disciples were the ones who personally hand crafted the sword.

The afternoon sun in the winter was gentle and hazy. After noon had passed, the last match of the Total Faction Martial Meeting would begin. This was the showdown between the top talents within the several hundred thousand miles of the Seven Profound territory; this would decide who was the number one of the younger generation!

As the fateful moment approached, the cheers of the arena became thunderous, drowning out every other sound for hundreds of miles. By this time, no one dared to mock or look down on Lin Ming, not even the Seven Profound Valleys' disciples. Everyone just wanted to see this showdown between these two geniuses that stood at the apex of talent. This was an opportunity that only came around once every several hundred years. It could be said that this sort of chance could only occur through the fickle fortunes of fate. It had to be known that if a martial artist didn't step into the Xiantian realm, they would live at most around 200 years. For them, this battle would only happen once in their lifetimes! By just that point alone, it was enough to excite them to the point of frothing at the mouth!

On the martial stage, Lin Ming and Jiang Baoyun stood 200 feet apart. Jiang Baoyun opened the sword case he carried on his back, and took out the vivid blue longsword.

With this sword in hand, the momentum that Jiang Baoyun had already gathered around him suddenly shifted. His eyes sharpened as if they contained a limitless sword light, piercing the heart of anyone he glanced at.

If Jiang Baoyun had been a calm man with a gentle temperament, then now he had the qualities of the finest sword. He was sharp, ice-cold, and filled with murderous intent!

Jiang Baoyun pointed sword fingers at Lin Ming and said, "Before this Martial Meeting began, my Sovereign once told me that Ouyang Ming, who I lost to three years ago at the last Martial

Meeting, had reached the peak Pulse Condensation period and would be my greatest match. He cautioned me to take be careful, but I told him that Ouyang Ming was not my greatest rival; my greatest rival is only myself! If I cannot continuously defeat talents of a third-grade sect, then what qualifications do I have to even speak of pursuing the end of the sword path

“But now, those words...” Jiang Baoyun took a deep breath, his eyes flashing with a dazzling light as if they were bright stars shining in the inky black night.

“I cannot help but acknowledge that your talent far exceeds mine. When you and I were the same age, I did not have your strength. But more than that, I am even more enthusiastic. A peerless powerhouse needs a grand stage to grow. This small Seven Profound territory does not qualify for such a stage, and even being the number one hero of the Seven Profound territory holds no meaning for me. Even worse, my eyes might be clouded by this title, and I might become complacent, weak! Therefore when I was 18 years old, I began to challenge to talents of all other third-grade sects, including even Peacock Mountain. At the start, I lost many and won only a few times. But after that, I won many times, and lost only a few! And now this year, I challenged four geniuses, and was defeated not even once!

“Therefore, I once again became confused, thinking that I would lose my way. And then you appeared! You are the rival of my destiny. Once I defeat you, I will become a hero of this era. The greater your talent, the higher my spirit burns with passion!

“Lin Ming, do not let me down!”

Lin Ming looked at Jiang Baoyun with surprise, he hadn't imagined he would have such a broad view of the world.

In one year, he had challenged four other geniuses from different sects, and defeated them all. One had to know that this was an extraordinary achievement. After all, the Seven Profound Valleys couldn't be considered the highest of the third-grade sects.

No wonder. Although Jiang Baoyun had lost to Ouyang Ming in the last Total Faction Marital Meeting, his power and influence now far exceeded Ouyang Ming's, and he held an unshakable position in the heart of every disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys. All of this was accomplished by his own sword!

Lin Ming also understood why Jiang Baoyun had kindly invited him to join the Sword Faction. This was because he was not afraid of a challenge. On the contrary, he longed for a true opponent to test himself. The desire to challenge himself... this was his heart of martial arts, this was the heart of martial arts that a genuine master should have!

Lin Ming slowly said, "From the moment I began to walk the path of martial arts, I had heard the great name of the Seven Profound Valleys. To the me of that time, the Seven Profound Valleys was like a forbidden temple that loomed high in the heavens, impossible for us ordinary commoners to even see. After I stepped into the hallowed halls of Sky Fortune Kingdom's Seven Profound Martial House, I became increasingly aware of just how terrifying the Seven Profound Valleys was. Because of your existence, there are many martial artists like me, common,

ordinary ones, who have forever lost their chance to practice martial arts. This is the fate that has been engraved within their very bones since birth! Since that moment, I had resolved to someday bring my spear here and break through that fate of imprisonment, to fight for what belongs to me, and take control of my own destiny!

“Now, what I will say is that if you wish to take me as the rival of your destiny, then I will tell you that I will not disappoint you. However, whether or not you can keep up with my pace will all depend on yourself!”

As Lin Ming said these words, the entire audience was startled.

This was just crazy talk, a martial artist from the 36 countries had actually said such insolent words. If it were just a few days ago, then these Seven Profound Valleys’ disciples would have been laughing until they rolled on the floor, but now, no one dared to laugh. This was because Lin Ming had the ability to say so!

“Good!” Jiang Baoyun laughed, “Lin Ming, take out your spear!”

These words filled with a surging fighting spirit were just like a thunderclap that rolled throughout the entire Profound Sky Mountains.

“Take out your spear!”

“Take out your spear!”

“Take out your spear!”

The echo impacted into the sky, reverberating between the heavens and earth!

At this moment, the entire atmosphere of the arena lit up in a glorious frenzy. This time, the cheers were not for Jiang Baoyun – nor were they for Lin Ming. They were only for this match that would decide the top master of the younger generation!

Lin Ming turned his wrist, and the Heavy Profound Soft Spear appeared in his hand. His aura immediately erupted; he was just like an implacable mountain!

At this moment, Jiang Baoyun also moved. He began to slowly walk towards Lin Ming. However, his footsteps had an unapproachable feeling, as if the ground he walked on could not be violated. After a few steps, the unbelievable occurred. As Jiang Baoyun moved forwards, he left behind a phantom that was identical to his shadow!

This phantom was also wearing black clothes and holding the Blue Peak treasure sword in his hand. It was almost impossible to discern any difference between it and Jiang Baoyun.

Phantom?

Lin Ming’s brows furrowed, and his soul force swept out; he was

actually able to feel a chilling murderous intent emitting from that phantom body!

It wasn't just a ghost, but a true phantom that could attack. Its own attack power was no weaker than the true Jiang Baoyun!

Lin Ming drew in a breath of cold air, there was actually such a cultivation method in this world?

As two Jiang Baoyuns appeared, the audience was stunned.

Jiang Baoyun said, "From your expression, it seems that you've already deduced the truth. You're right, the phantom behind me is not a just a ghost, it is a true swordsman. It has the same speed and attack power as I do – it is my Sword Spirit Avatar. Right now, it could be said that you are fighting two of me."

"What? Simultaneously fighting two Jiang Baoyuns!?"

Many people were frightened silly. Jiang Baoyun was already an abnormal freak, and his skill with the sword was at the highest peak. His attacks were sharp, swift, and incomparably fierce. And now Lin Ming had to fight two Jiang Baoyuns at once, what kind of concept was this?

Everyone knew just how terrifying Jiang Baoyun was. In one year, he had challenged four top talents of third-grade sects, and had achieved victory against all of them. But because Jiang Baoyun had fought in distant lands, his moves were unknown, and no one

knew just what the limits of his strength were.

In the audience, Qin Xingxuan was nervously wringing her hands together, her palms already wet with sweat. Could Lin Ming defend against this? And Jiang Baoyun still had that Black Crystal Sword!

“Sword Spirit Avatar?”

Lin Ming could be considered opened minded. There were countless varieties of martial artist, and too many that he didn't understand. There were some he had never heard of, and even some that he could never have imagined.

Almost all of these abilities and skills were either mediocre or of an unorthodox origin. Because there were just too many, there had to be some cultivation methods that were considered wonderful treasures even in the Realm of the Gods, waiting for him to find.

“Graceful Sword!”

Jiang Baoyun gave a loud shot, and there was only a flash of blue. That flash of blue was too quick, it was just like a flicker of color that suddenly appeared in front of Lin Ming!

Lin Ming's pupils contracted.

Golden Roc Shattering the Void!



Ka!

The sword light directly pierced through Lin Ming, Jiang Baoyun and his blade had cleanly sliced through Lin Ming's body. But it soon became clear that he was only an afterimage!

Jiang Baoyun hadn't even looked back when his Sword Spirit Avatar shot forwards with the same speed, unstoppable!

The blue sword flickered, thrusting straight towards Lin Ming's throat. At this time, Lin Ming was in the air – he could not evade!

“Ah!” The audience didn't even have time to cry out in alarm. Lin Ming's eyes flashed with flight, Concept of Wind!

Ka!

Another afterimage was cut apart. Lin Ming fell to the ground with his spear, a foot-long cut in his plain clothes.

“Good speed!”

Lin Ming was shocked. The truth was that Lin Ming's speed wasn't slow. The Concept of Wind was fused into his attacks and into his movements. Whether it was movement speed or attack speed, he far exceeded a martial artist of the same level!

However, he had been completely unable to catch up to Jiang Baoyun's speed. It could only be said that Jiang Baoyun's speed was completely abnormal!

How was this possible?

Lin Ming found this hard to believe; was this really a speed that a Pulse Condensation period martial artist could achieve?

'I see... so Jiang Baoyun has already comprehended his own Sword Step.'

In the Seven Profound Valleys' Grand Hall, Shi Zongtian was watching Jiang Baoyun, finding it difficult to remain calm. This so-called Sword Step was when one's own movement fused into one's sword intent. When a person's movement achieved the boundary of becoming one with the sword, the sword would move as the person did, and the person would move as the sword did. Because of this, Jiang Baoyun was able to reach a truly terrifying speed.

To walk the sword path, one not only needed a deep cultivation, but also an extremely high perception. Jiang Baoyun was able to reach this Sword Step boundary because of his own indispensable talent and perception!

It wasn't only Shi Zongtian. Several other faction elders were startled. Lin Ming's speed was truly praiseworthy, but Jiang Baoyun's speed was even quicker! He had a natural inborn Sword Spirit, and he had managed to comprehend his own Sword Step at

the young age of 19. Such a terrifying swordsman had never been seen in the Seven Profound territories within the last millennium!

The Refiner Faction Sovereign Huo Xuan couldn't help but ask, "Elder Jiang, just what realm has Jiang Baoyun reached? Just a year ago I had seen him in action, and he is completely incomparable with his current self."

## Chapter 289 – The Limit Of Speed

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The Sword Faction Great Elder shook his head and said, “After Baoyun awakened the Sword Spirit within his body, he’s made 10,000 miles of progress every day. Even I find it difficult to estimate what level he is at now. During his four challenges this year, I accompanied him on three of them. The growth he’s made through every battle is just incredible!”

Hearing the Sword Faction Great Elder say such praise, those present felt amazed. It was just too striking that even the Sword Faction Great Elder didn’t know the limits of Jiang Baoyun’s strength. This growth rate was just bewildering. Jiang Baoyun kept creating miracles, he was just like the main character of some fantasy novel.

Shi Zongtian’s eyes shined and he couldn’t help but think in his heart, ‘Sword Faction’s Jiang Baoyun, Puppet Faction’s Mugu Buyu, Zither Faction’s Qin Wuxin, and now we also have an even more amazing talent, Lin Ming. With these four great talents gathered here in this single generation, is it time for my Seven Profound Valleys to usher in eternal times of prosperity?’

Xiu!

On the martial stage, an icy blue radiance shone out. At the same time, the two Jiang Baoyuns both flourished their swords, and two sword energies instantly twined together, the imposing aura in the air sharply rising to the peak.

When the two swords combined, the sum was greater than the parts. The sword energy pierced through the void, slicing through the reinforced martial stage array formation as if it were nothing but a sheet of tofu. The sharp aura instantly caused the audience to feel cold, as if that chilling sword aura was up against their own backs.

Facing this combined sword energy, Lin Ming held his spear horizontally with both hands. Azure true essence erupted, and the sonorous roar of a dragon cried out as a black dragon shadow appeared behind him. This was the first time Lin Ming had released the power of the strongest True Dragon after consolidating his true essence in the Pulse Condensation period.

Kacha!

The martial stage began to shake, and cracks spread on the tiled floor under Lin Ming's feet like a spiderweb. His spear thrust out, and vibrating true essence divided into 10,000 filaments, howling forth!

Saber like tiger, spear like dragon. With the power of the True Dragon attached to the spear, it could display the ultimate power!

Bang!

Two terrifying energies collided in a deafening explosion; turbulent waves of true essence wantonly surged forth, the entire martial stage shook!

Ka ka ka!

The icy blue sword energy was constantly breaking, but the azure true essence was also constantly melting. However, the point of energy impact was slowly sliding towards Jiang Baoyun. This meant that Jiang Baoyun's sword energy was losing against the azure true essence!

“Even with two sword energies combined, Jiang Baoyun's attack is inferior to Lin Ming!”

“Lin Ming's attack power is just too weird! In terms of attack power, Jiang Baoyun is weaker than him!”

The audience was aware of just how powerful Jiang Baoyun's sword energy was. When Jiang Baoyun had fought Ouyang Ming, he had only needed to slice out a few casual sword energies to scatter apart Ouyang Ming's Absolute Life Purple Flame that he had summoned with his full true essence at the Perfect fifth stage of the 'Divine Acacia Power'. At that time, Jiang Baoyun hadn't even used a sword. But now, Jiang Baoyun and his Spirit Sword Avatar had combined together, and they were still weaker than Lin Ming's spear!

Peng!

True essence waves crashed out. Jiang Baoyun and his Sword Spirit Avatar instantly flashed, his figure fading. Although his attack power was inferior to Lin Ming's, his speed was still superior!

Cha! Cha!

Two sword energies pierced towards Lin Ming from two different directions, their speed already reaching the degree at which they was hard to see!

However, Lin Ming hadn't even turned his head to look. He completely liberated his perception, using his soul force to sense all the information in the air, determining where Jiang Baoyun's attack would come from.

“Flow like Silk!” The azure true essence had already congealed, and it erupted again! Lin Ming aligned his spear with the sword energy, and 10,000 vibrating true essence filaments divided in half, 5000 vibrating true essence filaments each directly impacting the sword energies!

Peng! Peng!

The sword energies broke apart. At the same time, a purple power of thunder ran out from the ruins of the sword energy, rushing towards Jiang Baoyun like a deadly blade!

Ca!

In the instant that the lightning struck, Jiang Baoyun's body flickered and he only left behind a vague blur, not even giving Lin Ming the slightest opportunity to strike.

‘He’s too fast!’ Lin Ming was startled. This was the first time that he had encountered someone whose speed was so fast that he couldn’t hope to match them.

With his thick cultivation true essence and his Sword Step, Jiang Baoyun’s speed was already beyond the limit that a Pulse Condensation period martial artist could reach.

As for Lin Ming’s Golden Roc Shattering the Void, although it could be said to be one of the most powerful movement techniques that existed, his cultivation was just too low. Firstly, Lin Ming was only at the early Pulse Condensation period, and secondly, he hadn’t cultivated Golden Roc Shattering the Void to a high enough level. Golden Roc Shattering the Void had a total of 12 layers, and the Supreme Elder that passed away only had eight of them within his memories. As for Lin Ming, he had only truly learnt the first layer.

With just some superficial ability in Golden Roc Shattering the Void along with Lin Ming’s lower cultivation, his movement was naturally slower than Jiang Baoyun’s Sword Step.

Lin Ming was already considering that after the Total Faction Martial Meeting ended, he would cultivate a thunder-attribute movement technique with the aid of the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, and make up for his insufficient movement speed. After all, a thunder-attribute martial artist normally had an enormous superiority in terms of movement and speed.



Peng peng peng!

Another three sword energies were broken!

The martial stage was run through with wide fissures in the ground, Jiang Baoyun's sword light was just too terrifying. However, Lin Ming's spear could actually break it. It could be said that the azure true essence combined with Flow like Silk was just too strong.

Swish swish!

Jiang Baoyun and Lin Ming's speed was too quick; the audience could barely see vague blurs of icy blue sword light and azure true essence. When these forces collided in the same place, bursts of vibrant, dreamy blue light radiated out.

Although Lin Ming's speed was inferior to Jiang Baoyun's, to the common viewer, their speed had already surpassed the limits of their sight.

It was only when Lin Ming's speed lowered a bit as he thrust out his spear was the audience able to barely see his movements. But this was only a very short moment. Because of the persistence of one's vision remaining in the eyes, every action he made was like a ghost. In just a single breath of time, Lin Ming had already thrust out his spear several dozen times.

These spears were not chaotic or random. Every spear was able to

break apart three or four sword energies that Jiang Baoyun cast out. In other words, Jiang Baoyun and his Sword Spirit Avatar had already sliced out hundreds of swords!

Just a day ago, the new reinforced protective array formation had been placed down. But now, it was fiercely shaking again. The entire martial stage was whipped into a tornado, and the broken tiles of the martial stage were picked up into the brutal winds. These fragments were like arrows that shot in all directions!

The audience was dumbfounded. They could only see more and more cracks and fissures appearing in the martial stage at a terrifying speed. When had they ever seen such a competition of extreme speed? Was this really a battle between Pulse Condensation period martial artists? Even Houtian realm martial artists would not be so abnormal!

“They are too fast, the realm their speed approaches in inconceivable. Even Senior-apprentice Sister Huan, who is a self-proclaimed speed master, can’t even match up to half of their speed.

A young Zither Faction girl muttered to herself. Huan Xiaodie was a direct disciple who excelled most at speed. However, what she excelled most at was already worse than Jiang Baoyun and Lin Ming by far. She had no other aspect that she could even compare in.

In normal years, direct disciples of the Mirage Faction were inferior to the Sword Faction direct disciples. However, the disparity usually wouldn’t be so great. At most it would be equal to

the gap between Huan Xiaodie and Jiang Lanjian.

It could only be said that Jiang Baoyun was too abnormal!

But although Jiang Baoyun was abnormal, how could Lin Ming, a martial artist from the 36 countries, be such a monstrous talent? With his early Pulse Condensation cultivation, he was managing to fight Jiang Baoyun to a draw!

At this moment onstage, even Jiang Baoyun was startled. Lin Ming's movement speed and spear speed was inferior to his own, but when he and his Sword Spirit Avatar cut out with five swords, Lin Ming was able to dodge two and block the last three with a single spear. That azure true essence that was attached to the silver spear was just too strong. It endlessly grew, and also contained a strange power of vibration.

Lin Ming's speed was inferior, but with his formidable attack power and freakish defensive capabilities, he was not at a disadvantage at all!

10,000 vibrating filaments of azure true essence surrounded Lin Ming, protecting him all around. Jiang Baoyun's sword energy was able to puncture it, but was quickly worn down. No matter what he tried, he was unable to harm Lin Ming. The azure true essence that was lost was immediately replenished.

'Lin Ming is truly a versatile combat talent. Even with my speed advantage, I cannot defeat him!' Jiang Baoyun remembered that when Jiang Lanjian had fought Lin Ming and first used his Concept

of Wind, the situation then was the exact same as it was now. Jiang Lanjian had sent out wind blades and sword energies, and still was unable to do anything to Lin Ming. Finally, he engaged in a melee battle, only able to meet Lin Ming head-on!

A sword master's Sword Spirit true essence and sharp sword energy could only display their greatest potential when attached to the sword blade. Naturally, the attack power of long-distance sword energy was inferior to directly striking with a sword.

“Big Dipper Sword Step!”

Jiang Baoyun's eyes flashed and he and his Sword Spirit Avatar simultaneously displayed the Big Dipper Sword Step. Human and sword became one, as if they fused into the sword light, instantly arriving in front of Lin Ming.

This extreme speed had already completely surpassed the limit at which anyone could respond!

Cha cha!

Two cold blue treasure swords stabbed into Lin Ming's body like a bolt of lightning. These two swords contained Jiang Baoyun's complete sword potential, and their attack power reached the limit of this instant blade!

The azure true essence was simply unable to defend against such fierce sword strikes; it could only be blocked by the Heavy

Profound Soft Spear!

But the problem was, with such a fast attack speed that reached the limit, how would Lin Ming have any time to wield his spear? Even if he managed to bring his spear up in time, how could he possibly simultaneously keep of the attacks of two treasure swords?

In that split-second, Lin Ming's eyes burst with light, his pupils flashed with true thunder!

Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder!

True essence surged into the Heretical God Seed, the Thunder Soul had long been ready to explode with force!

Kacha!

Thick snakes of purple electricity ran out of Lin Ming's body, recklessly dancing around him. At this moment, Lin Ming's body burst into a dazzling purple radiance, it was like a god of thunder had been born unto the world!

At such a close distance, no matter how fast Jiang Baoyun was, there was no way he could dodge!

As this electric light entered his body, Jiang Baoyun's entire body numbed. The power of the savage thunder flushed into his meridians, brutally destroying everything in sight. Over half of the

sword potential instantly disappeared from his blade, the rest continued thrusting at Lin Ming!

Facing Jiang Baoyun's sword, Lin Ming simply had no way to avoid it. Since he was destined to not be able to evade, he wouldn't evade. From the very beginning, he decided to go down with his opponent in a battle of attrition. He galvanized the azure true essence in his body to the max, preparing to meet this attack head-on.

Pah pah!

With two light sounds, the sword blades pierced through the true essence protecting Lin Ming, stabbing into his body. On his lower abdomen and back, two streams of blood shot out.

Even though his blood shot out, Lin Ming simply did not care. He cried out, "Body Tearing Bone Shattering Fist!"

Peng peng!

He released the spear from his hands, punching out with two fists, directly smashing into Jiang Baoyun and the Sword Spirit Avatar's faces!

In short-distance attacks, a fist was faster than a spear!

Under normal circumstances, Jiang Baoyun would have been able to use his extreme speed to avoid Lin Ming's fists. However, as

it was now, Jiang Baoyun's body pulsed with a savage power of thunder; Lin Ming's sudden attack had taken him by surprise!

## Chapter 290 – The Second Sword

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The true essence that protected Jiang Baoyun's body was much stronger than a normal martial artist's, but in front of Lin Ming, it was no different to thin paper! Jiang Baoyun could clearly remember just what a pitiful state Mugu Buyu had ended up in after he had tried to defend against Lin Ming's all-out attack!

“Big Dipper Sword Step!”

Jiang Baoyun fiercely bit down on his tongue to restore his numbed body with the intense shock of pain. His movement instantly recovered, and he stormed backwards. Even so, he was still caught up in the fist wind. A vast and incomparable power of vibration immediately fluxed into Jiang Baoyun's organs, nearly causing his heart to stop.

Jiang Baoyun's throat tasted copper, and blood leaked from the corners of his mouth.

As for his Sword Spirit Avatar, it was even worse. Lin Ming punched its face and azure true essence erupted!

The Sword Spirit Avatar had no true essence protecting its body, its defensive power was zero. Because of this, once Lin Ming punched it, its entire head blew apart! And its body began to slowly fade away.

Jiang Baoyun's face whitened, his body staggering backwards as the backlash struck him.



As long as his true self didn't perish, then his Sword Spirit Avatar could be considered immortal. But the Avatar was still linked to his main body. Once it was forcefully scattered, Jiang Baoyun would also suffer great damage.

“Fierce!” Jiang Baoyun wiped the blood from the corners of his lips. The reason that he had chosen to attack Lin Ming with ranged strikes from the very start was because he feared Lin Ming's utterly terrifying explosive force. Because of the existence of that coiling dragon steel needle, Jiang Baoyun had kept a good distance between them. He was confident in his own speed and reflexes to dodge that steel needle, but if he was in close range, then that certainty was no longer there!

He had suddenly used the Big Dipper Sword Step, and flashed in front of Lin Ming at a speed that neared teleportation, instantly using his strongest instant sword strike. Jiang Baoyun thought that at such an extreme speed, it would be impossible for Lin Ming to react with that coiling dragon steel needle.

However, he had never thought that Lin Ming's body seemed to have fused with the energy from the coiling dragon steel needle, and the power of thunder was highly compressed within him. As soon as he approached, Lin Ming had exploded with the power of thunder, and the result was that he had taken a big loss.

Jiang Baoyun was a swordsman, he was proud of his formidable melee combat abilities. He never thought that one day there would actually be someone who would force him away from melee distance!

The feeling that Lin Ming exuded was just as if he were a dangerous vicious beast, unapproachable!

As soon as the Sword Spirit Avatar was blown apart by Lin Ming's fist and Jiang Baoyun was injured, the entire audience sucked in collective breath of cold air.

"This battle is too intense! In an instant, the two of them are already severely wounded!" A 17 year old Seven Profound Valleys disciple said. With his cultivation, he could only see fuzzy afterimages of Lin Ming and Jiang Baoyun's movements.

"Both receiving heavy wounds? You are too naïve! I don't know how severe Jiang Baoyun's wounds are, but Lin Ming's are just nothing. When Jiang Baoyun and his Sword Spirit Avatar's swords pierced him, they were only a quarter of a foot in!" A disciple who participated in the Total Faction Martial Meeting said. His cultivation was already at the Pulse Condensation period, and his eyesight was much better than most people present.

A quarter of a foot was only a few inches. To a Pulse Condensation period martial artist, this wound was not considered a severe injury at all. Jiang Baoyun's sword was indeed swift and sharp, but most of the sword potential had been scattered by that Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder. Not only that, but with the added protection of the azure true essence, the swords hadn't managed to pierce deeply. Plus, there was also the enormous body defense capability enhancements that Lin Ming had obtained in the Sorcerer Pagoda. Ultimately, this was only considered a minor wound.

“It was just a split second of a melee fight, and yet Jiang Baoyun already suffered such a loss. Lin Ming is just a powder keg that’s ready to blow up any time. Who would dare to fight him in close-range like this!?”

“He took two sword stabs as if they were nothing; he’s just like a vicious beast in human form! This is Jiang Baoyun’s sword we’re talking about, it’s not some random nobody’s sword!”

“Lin Ming has to be the same as Mugu Buyu. His body must have been transformed in some way, otherwise how can a human body be so tenacious?”

As the audience spoke, the bleeding in Lin Ming’s front and back wounds had already stopped.

At this time, Lin Ming had stimulated the power of blood vitality in his body to the max, rapidly regenerating the wounds on his body. After he had passed through the life and death smelting trial in the Sorcerer Pagoda, the power of blood vitality in his body far surpassed a martial artist at the same level.

If one had powerful blood vitality, then not only would they have excellent endurance, but exorbitant regenerative capabilities. Although it was impossible to make a complete recovery in a short period of time, stopping some bleeding only took a few breaths.

Jiang Baoyun looked at Lin Ming, and took a deep breath. “I understand now. You are not someone that I can deal with by just

using my Blue Peak Sword.”

As Jiang Baoyun said this, he took out his sword case and withdrew that jet black sword. Finally, he had taken out the Black Crystal Sword.

“Jiang Baoyun’s taken out his second sword!”

“He’s finally used it! I wonder what sort of amazing final sword skill he can use with this sword?”

The entire audience was looking at the sword in Jiang Baoyun’s hand with a curious excitement. This dark blade had no reflection; it didn’t have the appearance that it was made from wood or metal, and it didn’t resemble jade either. No one was able to tell exactly what sort of materials this blade was made from.

After Jiang Baoyun extracted the Black Crystal Sword, he casually tossed away the Blue Peak Sword. Suddenly, the Sword Spirit Avatar that Lin Ming had scattered with a punch turned into a hazy blue sword energy that swirled around the Blue Peak Sword, wrapping around it. A moment later, a new Sword Spirit Avatar appeared, and the original Blue Peak Sword disappeared.

As the Sword Spirit Avatar was reformed, its body seemed even more lifelike, and the sword energy that emanated from its body was much more powerful; it was truly startling.

“The sword and Sword Spirit Avatar combined! Jiang Baoyun’s

comprehension of the sword path is just too amazing!”

“Two swords, the Sword Spirit Avatar uses one, and the true self uses the second. This is just too exciting! Heavens, this is what a true dual wielding swordsman is like!” In the stands above, a Sword Faction disciple was staring at Jiang Baoyun’s swords with obsession shining in his red eyes. If he could one day obtain two earth-step treasure swords and coordinate them with a Sword Spirit Avatar after becoming one with the sword, then what sort of concept would that be?

The orthodox swordsman took the lone sword as their king. This was because it was easier to reach the pinnacle of swordsmanship with a single blade. But for those with the same cultivation or lower, a dual wielder’s attack power was much higher. If they could learn Jiang Baoyun’s technique, then could take dual swords as their king, and still reach the pinnacle of swordsmanship. This alone was enough to cause any Sword Faction disciple to go crazy with desire!

It could be said that Jiang Baoyun had discovered his own unique dual sword method. Of course, to study such a dual sword method was extremely demanding, and one also needed to have a Sword Spirit in order to do so.

“You finally take out your Black Crystal Sword? I thought you would have done so earlier.” Lin Ming had some apprehension and dread towards this Black Crystal Sword.

Jiang Baoyun let loose a long breath, saying with a smile. “It’s not that I don’t want to, but as of right now, I don’t have full

control over this sword. And moreover, my Black Crystal Sword's strongest attack is a soul attack. Unfortunately... it seems soul attacks aren't too effective on you."

"Mm? Soul attack?" Lin Ming was stunned. A sword strike can contain a soul attack? Jiang Baoyun had actually managed to reach this step?

Lin Ming had long thought about fusing the Samsara martial intent soul attack into his spear moves. However, all of his attempts so far had failed. Before the finals of this Total Faction Martial Meeting, Lin Ming had almost solely used soul attacks, and that was because he wished to gain deeper insights into the Samsara martial intent through constant use.

And now, Lin Ming had defeated masters like Bi Tinghua with his soul attack, and his understanding of his Samsara martial intent had reached a new level, much more profound than it used to be. Yet he was still unable to have his spear moves contain any degree of soul attack as before.

'How strange! Jiang Baoyun is a swordsman, and he cultivates the sword with all his heart. How could he possibly split his time to cultivate his soul force? If his soul force isn't strong, then how could he use soul attacks?'

Zheng-

The Black Crystal Sword let out a strange, long sound that carried a peculiar penetrating power. It was as if it were

resounding closely near the ears of everyone present.

As the cold winter sunlight illuminated the stage, it shined onto the Black Crystal Sword. But there seemed to be a cold and deep aura around the Black Crystal Sword, as if it had its own force field, swallowing any light that came near it.

“Lin Ming, I said just now that I cannot control the power of my Black Crystal Sword. If it truly strikes you, you might be severely wounded or even die. Of course, the one that is severely wounded might be you, or it might be me.”

Before Lin Ming had displayed the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, Jiang Baoyun had already taken him as an opponent of the same level. He didn't feel the least bit of contempt or disregard towards him. At that time, the strength that Lin Ming had revealed was far inferior to Jiang Baoyun, and the reason that Jiang Baoyun had taken Lin Ming as an equal opponent was purely because his swordsman intuition told him so.

“Good! I just want to personally experience your soul attack!” Lin Ming was filled with anticipation as he looked forwards to Jiang Baoyun's soul attack. He wanted to gain some insights from Jiang Baoyun's sword technique in battle, and he was also curious as to how a top swordsman like Jiang Baoyun who cultivated the sword path with all his heart would use a soul attack.

As Lin Ming flourished the spear in his hands, his entire body combusted in an inferno of azure true essence; he looked just like a deep blue pyre of energy. He had already opened the Heretical God Force. Although the Heretical God Force could not last for several

dozen breaths of time, it was more than enough for this final battle!

The audience began to surge with wave after wave of cheers and screams, the excitement in the arena reaching a fever high. Qin Xingxuan nervously clenched her hands. Jiang Baoyun had said that even he wasn't able to control his ultimate sword.

A soul injury was difficult to treat. Although Qin Xingxuan knew that Lin Ming's soul defense was extraordinary, her concern for him was causing chaos in her mind. It felt as if her heart was stuck in her throat.

“Big Dipper Sword Step!”

On the martial stage, Jiang Baoyun crossed over a hundred feet as if it didn't exist, his speed was almost like teleportation. This was also why Lin Ming didn't waste any of his time, and opened the Heretical God Force ahead of time.

“Black Crystal Sword!”

Jiang Baoyun slashed out with the Black Crystal Sword. At that moment, it was as if all sound had disappeared, and all the nearby light was being sucked into the Black Crystal Sword.

“Hah!”

An invisible sword potential violently fluctuated outwards. In



the moment that Jiang Baoyun slashed out, all of the sword-wielding martial artists in the arena experienced a shock. They could feel their swords vibrating, as if they wanted to escape from their sheaths!

Lin Ming could clearly feel his own azure true essence being constantly cut apart. This sword wasn't fast, but it contained an immeasurably calm feeling.

Power of the True Dragon!

Lin Ming swept out with his spear, and the shade of a Azure Dragon appeared behind him; the power of a True Dragon burst forth!

“Roar!”

The booming cry of a dragon thundered into the skies. Lin Ming's spear thrust out, containing an indomitable momentum. It was like the air itself was exploding in its wake!

Light twisted as an azure energy and deep black energy collided together. Time suddenly seemed to slow to a halt, with no intense explosion occurring. In that moment, Jiang Baoyun's sword energy pierced through Lin Ming's azure true essence, splitting atop of his spearpoint. There was a black stream of light that sunk into the Heavy Profound Soft Spear, piercing into Lin Ming's body!

## Chapter 291 – The Final Strike

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In that moment, Jiang Baoyun's sword energy had pierced through Lin Ming's azure true essence, splitting atop his spearpoint. There was a black stream of light that sunk into the Heavy Profound Soft Spear, piercing Lin Ming's body!

Mm!!

Lin Ming wobbled, a strange feeling directly rushing into his spiritual sea. He could hear the clear whistling of a sword flying past his ear. This clear sound seemed very pleasant, but it was very uncomfortable to listen to.

Soul attack?

Lin Ming instantly reacted, but that sword sound that was in his ears had already flown into Lin Ming's spiritual sea!

Bang!

Within Lin Ming's spiritual sea, a mighty black sword appeared, cutting down!

“Roar!”

The sea boiled, massive waves of water rolling around; a Purple Flood Dragon shot up into the sky, crashing into that great black

sword! Both forces struck each other, and thunder exploded. The black sword energy radiated outwards, causing monstrous surges within the spiritual sea.

Lin Ming shook, his face paling to the extreme. Was this great black sword the so called Sword Spirit body? Lin Ming had only heard of this before. Sword Spirit. So this so called Sword Spirit was actually a sword-shaped soul. Those who had an inborn Sword Spirit were extremely rare individuals. They could fuse their own soul into their sword intent. Their perception in all sword arts was astonishing, and they could cultivate the sword path with half the effort and twice the result.

Obviously, Jiang Baoyun had fused the sword intent within his soul into this strike, therefore he was able to create a soul attack!

Jiang Baoyun's soul force wasn't powerful, but with the fusion of sword intent, it wasn't something that a normal martial artist could compare with.

“What a strong Sword Spirit!”

Lin Ming's spiritual sea had integrated the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, his soul defense ability was beyond what anyone could imagine. And yet he could not actually immediately stop the soul attack of this Sword Spirit!

However, this Sword Spirit's indomitability had aroused the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder's own arrogant heart!

“Roar!”

The Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder burst into a loud roar, its entire body shining with a dazzling purple light. Its heavy claws smashed down on the Sword Spirit, shaking it and causing its radiance to dim.

Peng!

Jiang Baoyun received his sword and drew back. In that strike a moment ago, he had felt sick to his stomach.

Although Jiang Baoyun was aware that Lin Ming had an incomparably formidable soul defense power, he never thought that it would be to such a ridiculous degree where it had easily broken his soul attack. If his soul wasn't wrapped in the sword intent where its defense was greatly strengthened, then he might have suffered a severe soul wound in that attack.

Jiang Baoyun's soul attack was nullified, and his sword energy attacks didn't work. The endless azure true essence continually protected Lin Ming, and Lin Ming's own bodily defense capabilities were just mind boggling; they were formidable to the point where it made anyone's blood boil with envy.

Jiang Baoyun could only break through Lin Ming's defense in a close range attack, but because he feared the Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, he also couldn't get close.

Even if it was Jiang Baoyun, who was known for and proud of his sword's attack power, he also had a dreadful feeling of being forced into a dead end.

And beyond that, Jiang Baoyun had discovered that even after all this fierce fighting that had occurred so far, Lin Ming hadn't shown any difficulty in sustaining his true essence. This proved that Lin Ming's own endurance far exceeded his own!

If this fight dragged on, Jiang Baoyun wouldn't be defeated, but if it were too long, then his true essence would slowly be whittled down, and his defeat would only be a matter of time.

Realizing this, Jiang Baoyun pointed his sword at Lin Ming and said, "Lin Ming, you are the strongest individual that I have encountered in the younger generation in my 20 years of life. The speed and soul attack which I have been so foolishly proud of have no effect on you. Now, all I have is my final sword. If you can receive it, then I will admit defeat."

Lin Ming had also attained many insights through that soul attack just now. Hearing Jiang Baoyun say this, he responded, "Okay. After this battle, whether I win or lose, I am very willing to continue exchanging pointers with Senior-apprentice Brother Jiang. After this match, I have obtained many benefits."

"Haha, the feeling is mutual!"

Jiang Baoyun's momentum erupted once more. In that moment, it was as if his entire body had become a sword with violent

potential, incomparably sharp!

“Sword Shattering Clear Sky!”

This was Jiang Baoyun’s strongest move. It used his own fused Sword Spirit and sword intent as the driving force in order to activate the ultimate legacy skill of the Sword Faction. With Jiang Baoyun’s current cultivation, he could only display the barest surface of this power. Yet even so, it still had the might of gods and ghosts!

Sword energy cut through the void, and a sharp whistling sword wind howled through the entire mountain valley.

Meeting this final strike of Jiang Baoyun, Lin Ming’s vision was steady, and both hands grasped his spear. His heart had already focused into the shaft, and the power of the True Dragon was revolving to its limit.

Behind Lin Ming, the shadow of the True Dragon appeared once again.

With a faint dragon’s roar, Lin Ming’s spear thrust out!

Vibrating true essence screamed forth, violently smashing into Jiang Baoyun’s sword energy. The tiles under their feet were shattered into fragments; with this attack, they were evenly matched!

For Jiang Baoyun to use a sword to meet a spear and simultaneously resist Lin Ming's 10,000 vibrating azure true essence filaments without even being forced back, the power of this Sword Shattering Clear Sky could be imagined!

At this time, another sword began to resonate. The Sword Spirit Avatar that Jiang Baoyun had created before had gripped onto its blue sword, cutting down at Lin Ming!

“Ah!!!”

The audience cried out in alarm. Qin Ziya, Qin Xingxuan, and everyone else felt their hearts stop. This Sword Shattering Clear Sky was already unstoppable, but there was also the Sword Spirit Avatar. This was a double attack!

Lin Ming's pupils contracted, and true essence quickened within the Heretical God Seed. The weapon that he hid within his body, the coiling dragon steel needle, roared forth!

Bang!

The coiling dragon steel needle struck above the sword light, the power of thunder exploded forth!

Ka ka ka!

It was like a glorious purple sun had dawned upon the martial stage. The Sword Spirit Avatar was immediately incinerated into

nothingness, and the Blue Peak sword lost its consciousness, crashing down and slicing into the ground.

At the same time, the coiling dragon steel needle rushed forwards. Although its power was greatly reduced, it howled as it flew towards Jiang Baoyun!

Puff!

The true essence protecting Jiang Baoyun's body was torn apart, his entire body paralyzed. He was sent flying backwards, spitting out a mouthful of blood!

Jiang Baoyun slammed against the protective light curtain and fell onto the floor. Because the light curtain array formation had been reinforced, it was now able to protect against an early Xiantian master's all-out attack. This was why no matter how intense Jiang Baoyun and Lin Ming's fight was, it still wasn't able to shatter the array formation like before.

The entire audience was deathly silent. In truth, Jiang Baoyun's defeat was not beyond anyone's expectations. It was more accurate to say that no one actually knew who would win and who would lose. This could be seen from the gambling houses odds before the match.

However, as the audience truly saw Jiang Baoyun lying flat on the martial stage, severely wounded, they all felt as if they were living in some fantastical dream.



To them, Jiang Baoyun was a myth. Within a single year, he had repeatedly defeated four third-grade sects' direct disciples, which also included the top third-grade sect Peacock Mountain.

This success felt as if it were out of reach for anyone else. Within the Seven Profound Valleys, Jiang Baoyun was considered invincible among the younger generation. Even if it was Ouyang Ming who had attained a higher rank during the last Martial Meeting, no one believed that he had even the slightest chance of suppressing Jiang Baoyun.

But now, this myth known as Jiang Baoyun who was the greatest talent the Sword Faction had seen for centuries, was actually defeated by a disciple of the 36 countries. Not only that, but this disciple's cultivation was only at the early Pulse Condensation period...

This was no different than a dream!

In the Grand Hall, Shi Zongtian was heavily breathing, gasping for breath. In this last match, he actually favored Lin Ming's odds of winning. But after watching the entire battle play out, he was extremely shocked – this was because of the coiling dragon steel needle!

The second time that the coiling dragon steel needle appeared, Shi Zongtian had a faint feeling in his heart of what it was. But he didn't dare to affirm this guess, or it was more accurate to say, he didn't dare to believe.

In this match, Lin Ming had obviously integrated the coiling dragon steel needle within his body, using it to resist Jiang Baoyun and his Sword Spirit Avatar in melee attacks to make up for his disadvantage in speed.

To use the coiling dragon steel needle to this degree, how could it possibly be some destructive instrument created by a master?

Because of this, Shi Zongtian was able to affirm the guess in his heart that this weapon was created from the condensation of a Thunder Soul. And the grade wasn't low either. It was at least a high-grade human step Thunder Soul, or maybe even an earth-step Thunder Soul!

This was an extremely absurd and preposterous speculation. A high-grade human-step Thunder Soul could only be absorbed by someone at least at the Xiantian realm.

As for an earth-step Thunder Soul, even a thunder-attribute middle Xiantian powerhouse would have to be cautious in absorbing it!

How could Lin Ming possibly accomplish this?

Shi Zongtian glanced at the other elders present, and he saw that only the Refiner Faction Sovereign and Array Faction elders were shocked with disbelief. As for the other elders, they showed no difference. Of course, they couldn't be blamed for not recognizing what this coiling dragon steel needle truly was. Originally, a Thunder Soul was an extremely rare and scarce existence, and

even the Seven Profound Valleys didn't have a thunder-attribute master, so they weren't familiar with it. Not only that, but the Thunder Soul in Lin Ming's palm had also changed shape into a needle.

Only those from the Refiner Faction and Array Faction suspected this. This was because they frequently dealt with the seven heaven and earth origin energies of metal, wood, water, fire, earth, wind and thunder. Of course, this was only a suspicion; they too weren't sure, and couldn't believe it.

Shi Zongtian couldn't help but glance at Mu Qinghong. Seeing that she didn't show any difference in expression, his heart immediately sunk.

This woman! She probably already knew!

Shi Zongtian hesitated for a moment and didn't say anything. This sort of matter was too shocking, if it spread out, then it would create unnecessary troubles.

Mu Qinghong pursed her lips as she sat near Shi Zongtian. Her eyes were bright as she gazed at Lin Ming. 'If his growth continues like this, then Lin Ming will enter into the Revolving Core realm. Not only that, but he will be a Revolving Core powerhouse who can fight above his realm!'

In the martial arts path, the further one walked, the more difficult it was to jump over realms to fight. This was because the higher one reached, the greater the gap between realms would

become, and the higher the disparity in cultivation. This was because those that rose higher were all top-tier geniuses when they were young. For instance, when they were in the Pulse Condensation period, they were also like Jiang Baoyun and Mugu Buyu, first class geniuses that could jump ranks to fight martial artists with higher cultivation. But to jump realms in battle when facing even more talented geniuses, this was simply harder than ascending to heaven!

Thus those Revolving Core powerhouses who could jump realms in battle were pivotal existences within the South Horizon Region!

‘It looks like even Qianyu underestimated him. He is a True Dragon within a deep pool. Soon, he will fly into the sky. It is just right that I came on this trip. No, I should have Qianyu come here personally!’

Mu Qinghong had a premonition that in the future, Lin Ming would become a main character who stood upon the greatest stage of the entire Sky Spill Continent, leaving his name for all of eternity!

Such a powerhouse would only be those Supreme Elders who founded their own Holy Lands and soared into the Realm of the Gods!

But, such mighty beings had already been absent from the South Horizon Region for thousands of years; it could be said that these figures no longer existed, and shouldn’t be considered.

As Mu Qinghong thought this, she sent a true essence sound transmission to the maid behind her, “Inform Young Mistress Qianyu and have her come here personally.”

## Chapter 292 – Reward

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The maid was stunned for a moment. She had been ordered to request that the Vermillion Bird Saintess come to the Seven Profound Valleys herself?

She hesitated and then replied, “My Lady, Her Highness the Saintess has recently gone into seclusion to complete the evolution of her life’s Vermillion Bird. It wouldn’t be appropriate to disturb her...”

“It’s already been one month. Little Flame’s evolution should almost be complete. There is much at stake concerning this matter about Lin Ming, it’s best if the Young Mistress personally comes here.”

“Yes, My Lady...” The two maids that Mu Qinghong had brought along nodded, and then walked away as they prepared to send a long distance sound transmission. There was no need to hide this matter from the Seven Profound Valleys.

Shi Zongtian saw the two maids leave and his heart suddenly left as well. Since these two maids left now, he would be an idiot if he didn’t know that they were going to report the situation of this Martial Meeting. If those old elders at Divine Phoenix Island obtained this news, then wouldn’t they immediately try poaching?

Shi Zongtian thought for a moment. He thought that if his position was switched, and he was an elder of Divine Phoenix Island, then there was no way that he would let off such a talent.

A fourth-grade sect had a much greater advantage in recruiting talent than a third-grade sect did. This was also one of the reasons why they could constantly suppress third-grade sects beneath them. The strong became stronger, and the weak became weaker.

Lin Ming couldn't truly be considered a disciple of the Seven Profound Valleys. He wasn't like Jiang Baoyun, who had grown up as a child in the Seven Profound Valleys and had his foundation within the Seven Profound Valleys, making it impossible for him to leave.

Thinking this, Shi Zongtian's expression became increasingly ugly. His Seven Profound Valleys just had too great a difference in strength with Divine Phoenix Island. If they truly tried to publically poach Lin Ming, Shi Zongtian would only be able to swallow this grievance. Divine Phoenix Island might end up with a reputation for bullying those beneath them, but besides that, there was nothing else to lose.

What should he do...

Shi Zongtian couldn't sit still.

In the worst case situation, he would only be able to draw back and form a good relationship with Lin Ming, while asking for Divine Phoenix Island to compensate them. Divine Phoenix Island could be considered the leader of the many other third-grade sects around here. If they did something so wicked and petty and didn't give any compensation, then they wouldn't be able to justify their

actions.

“Valley Master... should we send the rewards?”

The elder responsible for the tournament sat in the Grand Hall. He saw Shi Zongtian's complicated expression, but didn't know what he was worrying about. Therefore he asked the question of whether Lin Ming should receive the rewards. If Lin Ming took the rewards, but then switched to another sect, then they really would end up the fool.

“Send! Of course we must send! Naturally, we must keep our promise of a reward. Also, directly issue the Heaven Opening Pill to Lin Ming; there is no need to wait for him to reach peak Houtian.” Shi Zongtian said, acting decisively.

“Ah?” The elder asked in a daze.

“Do as I say. Consider this as establishing good relations with Lin Ming.”

Although a Heaven Opening Pill was rare and precious, the Seven Profound Valleys was still able to refine 20 or 30 every three years. It did hurt to give one out like this, but it was a manageable loss.

There was no need to short someone. If Lin Ming really did join Divine Phoenix Island, this matter of the reward not being given would eventually come up, and Lin Ming would inevitably have some disgust towards the Seven Profound Valleys because of it. Shi



Zongtian could see that Lin Ming's heart of martial arts was similar to the Seven Profound Valleys' Sword Faction's. This sort of martial artist stayed true to their conscience and heart – they would never be ungrateful.

If the Seven Profound Valleys could stay on good terms with a peerless powerhouse with just a Heaven Opening Pill and an earth-step treasure, then this was absolutely worth it. Then again, if Divine Phoenix Island really wanted to poach Lin Ming, the compensation they would pay wouldn't be small. A fourth-grade sect's compensation would be at least 20 Heaven Opening Pills and a good amount of medium-grade true essence stones.

Thus this reward was no loss for the Seven Profound Valleys.

“Yes, Valley Master, I shall manage this.” The elder said as he excused himself.

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“Martial House Master Qin, congratulations! Your Sky Fortune Kingdom truly showed off its greatness!”

“It is far more than greatness, it is earthshaking! An event that will go down in history!”

In the audience, several of the neighboring countries' Martial House Masters were congratulation Qin Ziya. The words they spoke were beautiful and flattering, but in truth their hearts were

green with envy.

Whoever attained first place in the Martial Meeting, their master would obtain a Heaven Opening Pill as a reward. As for who was Lin Ming's master, it was naturally considered to be Qin Ziya.

This was a Heaven Opening Pill, of which only 20 or 30 were refined every three years! That meant that on average, there were less than 10 per year! Except for the direct disciples, second ranked disciples and also some disciples who had huge connections and favors, other disciples would rarely receive a Heaven Opening Pill. There were many disciples who had a great chance to break through to the Xiantian realm. However, they lacked a Heaven Opening Pill, and because of this reason they would simply pass away at the peak Houtian realm.

Qin Ziya wasn't young. To him, the opportunity of receiving a second Heaven Opening Pill seemed to be getting slimmer every year. He never thought that he would actually stumble into such unexpected success!

Once he entered the Xiantian realm, he would instantly be promoted to an Outer Court elder. This status was much greater than being some Martial House Master of a small country!

Realizing that Qin Ziya would most likely become an Outer Court elder in the future, many people came up to flatter him.

Qin Ziya finally recovered his composure. He only felt as if he were in a dream. He smiled and said, "This is all because of Lin

Ming's heroic efforts, I'm only following his rising star."

Qin Ziya had excellent vision and foresight. After seeing Lin Ming's amazing talent, he decided to raise Lin Ming, and did not hesitate to put some treasures in Sky Fortune Kingdom's Seven Profound Martial House's treasury, and then motivate Lin Ming by promising further generous rewards.

At that time, Qin Ziya had only thought that Lin Ming would shine brightly at this Total Faction Martial Meeting; he never even imagined he would reach the top 10. Afterwards, Lin Ming's talent continued to grow, and Qin Ziya thought that during the next Total Faction Martial Meeting, Lin Ming might have a chance of becoming the champion.

At the same, even this idea was crazy for him. It had to be known that in all these years of the Total Faction Martial Meeting, there had never been a disciple of the 36 countries who had ranked first. There hadn't even been one to reach the top five! If the Seven Profound Valleys' disciples had known of Qin Ziya's thoughts, then they might have died laughing.

However, Qin Ziya never imagined that he had underestimated Lin Ming's potential by so much. The first time he went to the Total Faction Martial Meeting, he became the champion in a single attempt. Not only that, but his matches were against Mugu Buyu and Jiang Baoyun, two top talents that the Seven Profound Valleys hadn't seen in hundreds of years.

At this time, Qin Ziya suddenly thought of something. He pushed his way through the crowd and found Huoluo Nation's Martial

House Master Liang.

Qin Ziya cupped his fists together and said with a smile, “Martial House Master Liang, since we already agreed about the matter of the Seraphic Pond, then you can set the date. I can help Lin Ming with the travel arrangements.”

If Martial House Master Liang had felt some begrudging resentment, now he no longer dared to. What kind of status did Lin Ming have now? In the future, if he had minor success, he might become a Deputy Valley Master. He might even become a Valley Master! Such a character was not someone that a Huoluo Nation Martial House Master could afford to offend.

He squeezed out an ugly smile that looked as if he were crying and said, “Martial House Master Qin must be joking. When Little Brother Lin has free time he can come to my Huoluo Nation, I’ll be waiting for whenever he comes.”

In these few words, Martial House Master Liang couldn’t say much. He could only hold his tongue and lower his head in compensation to try and establish some good relations. Besides that, there was nothing else he could do.

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300,000 miles south of the Seven Profound Valleys was the Southern Wilderness. The Southern Wilderness was 100,000 miles long and wide. A further 500,000 miles south was the South Sea. In the South Sea, there was an island that was like a haven of

paradise. The mortals who lived on the sea called this haven the Immortal Island. This island was scenic, exquisite, and incomparably beautiful. This ethereal land seemed to be crafted from jade, and there were even some people that claimed to have seen a phoenix flying around this Immortal Island.

Many people searched for this Immortal Island, but it seemed nothing more than an elusive mirage. One could see it, but when one went look for it, they would never find it.

This Immortal Island was the home of the top fourth-grade sect, Divine Phoenix Island.

Whilst the Seven Profound territory had winter weather with snow all over, Divine Phoenix Island was actually in the most blissful spring, with trees and flowers blooming gloriously everywhere.

Mu Qianyu had just finished a month-long seclusion. With the blood of the Thunder Flood Dragon and some other rare and precious materials, she had been able to help her life's Vermillion Bird to complete its evolution.

Now, Little Flame's power had reached the late Xiantian realm. With its Saint Beast bloodline, it was now a powerful ally of Mu Qianyu.

At this moment, Mu Qianyu received the one million mile limit sound transmission of Mu Qinghong.

The sound transmission included the results of the Seven Profound Valleys' Total Faction Martial Meeting from beginning to end, and even included Mu Qinghong's final appraisal of Lin Ming.

Mu Qianyu's beautiful face showed some surprise and consternation; she hadn't thought that Mu Qinghong's appraisal of Lin Ming would be so high.

"As long as he doesn't fall in the future, he will become a Revolving Core master, and not only that, but a Revolving Core master whose combat power exceeds those at his level?"

Mu Qianyu inhaled a deep breath. This appraisal of Lin Ming's talent was no less than her own!

"This little fellow, he really..." Mu Qianyu suddenly smiled. No matter what, Divine Phoenix Island would never let go of such a talent, especially now that they needed more personnel.

Thinking this, Mu Qianyu patted the Vermillion Bird's head and said, "Little Flame, let's take a trip to the Seven Profound Valleys."

Little Flame had just completed its evolution, and had experienced a month-long period of pain. It was too lazy to move at this time. Hearing Mu Qianyu's words, it rolled its large eyes and gave a few shrill chirps.

Mu Qianyu smiled and said, "You lazy bird, it's only one million miles, and 800,000 miles will be through a transmission array. You

just need to travel a tiny 200,000 miles.”

As soon as Little Flame heard that it had to fly 200,000 miles, it immediately began to issue out miserable moans and wails, whining over and over again. It had to obey Mu Qianyu, so it reluctantly stood up in a very forced appearance.

Mu Qianyu thought this was quite funny. Then she suddenly remembered, “Do you remember that barbeque you ate two months ago? We are going to see the barbecue boy, later, he will let you eat your fill.”

Although Little Flame had completed its evolution, it was still a very young and immature Vermillion Bird, just like a child. And just like a child, eating food was its most beloved pursuit. Listening to Mu Qianyu say this, Little Flame’s eyes immediately began to shine, and it fluttered its wings, impatiently ready for Mu Qianyu to embark.

Mu Qianyu didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. This silly lazy bird ate all sorts of spirit bamboo and fruits every day. If just a bit of that was converted to barbecue, it could probably fill up the entire Divine Phoenix Island.

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The following morning, Seven Profound Valleys –

“Mm? They are going to send me the Heaven Opening Pill and

earth-step treasure now?” When Lin Ming heard the transmission message from the Seven Profound Valleys’ deacon, he was very surprised. These two items were the prize for coming in first at the Total Faction Marital Meeting. The rules had stated he would have to reach the peak Houtian realm before he could obtain the Heaven Opening Pill. He hadn’t thought that they would send it to him now. With such a great medicine like the Heaven Opening Pill, Lin Ming might even be able to attack the Tempering Marrow boundary!

Within the ‘Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians’, there was also two additional stages above the Pulse Condensation period, the Eight Inner Hidden Gates and the Nine Stars of the Dao Palace. As Lin Ming imagined these, his heart rate began to speed up.

“Mm, yes, Junior-apprentice Brother Lin may follow me to the Seven Profound Valleys’ treasure pavilion and choose any earth-step treasure there you like. The Warden Elder is already awaiting you.” The messenger deacon respectfully said.



## Chapter 293 – I'll Use My Materials

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The Seven Profound Valleys' Treasure Pavilion was located at the highest peak of the Refiner Faction. Although it seemed that the disciples of the Refiner Faction and Array Faction were absolute messes when it came to combat effectiveness, their roles within the Seven Profound Valleys were pivotal. These two factions' annually assigned resources weren't much less than the Sword Faction's or the Acacia Faction's.

Of the Seven Profound Valleys' disciples who used treasures, at least 90% of those treasures came from the Refiner Faction. As for the Array Faction, they were the ones who created all of the various array formations, like the protection formations, essence gathering formations, or any other array formation.

The Seven Profound Valleys' seven great factions mutually depended upon each other. Although the Seven Profound Valleys had many internal contradictions and disputes arising between the factions, this was one of the main reasons that they were able to maintain a delicate balance for the last 600 years.

After Lin Ming arrived at the Treasure Pavilion, he saw an elder wearing a loose red gown waiting there for him. He was the Outer Sect elder of the Refiner Faction, Liu Xuan. His cultivation was at the early Xiantian realm, and with his current age, he had zero chance of becoming a Revolving Core master before he died. But even in terms of combat prowess, he was one of the lowest of all the Xiantian powerhouses, thus he did not throw his time and energy into learning combat-related martial skills, but instead devoted his entire being to refining. This was the reason that all the treasures that came from his hands were of the highest quality.

Seeing Lin Ming fly in on the Heavenly Wind Eagle, Liu Xuan smiled and said, “Haha, Apprentice Nephew Lin, this old man has been waiting for you for a long time.”

With Lin Ming’s current status, he could be described as a high and mighty figure within the Seven Profound Valleys. Although Liu Xuan was an elder, he still had to be respectful towards Lin Ming.

“Greetings, Elder.” Lin Ming respectfully bowed.

Seeing Lin Ming respectfully bow, Liu Xuan was also in a good mood. He said, “Apprentice Nephew Lin, please follow me. I shall lead you to choose whichever low-grade earth-step treasure you would like. As long as you take a fancy for it, you may select it.”

A high-grade human-step treasure was already very precious and rare, the one who crafted it needed to be a refining master with a minimum cultivation of the early Xiantian realm. This sort of treasure could not be bought in some city in a small country. Only someone like Zhang Guanyu could obtain one by relying on his connections through the Allied Trade Association.

As for a low-grade earth-step treasure, one needed to have a cultivation at least at the middle Xiantian realm. Even a late Xiantian refiner master would have a very high chance of failure. Although this was the Seven Profound Valleys’ Treasure Pavilion, they didn’t have many earth-step treasures. As for the better quality ones like the Zhang Family’s Blood Wave Saber, even a late

Xiantian master would be jealous of it.

Liu Xuan then took out a hexagonal key from his spatial ring and inserted it into the array disc at the Treasure Pavilion's front door. There was a 'longlonglong' sound, and the Treasure Pavilion's front door began to slowly swing open.

As the door opened, it revealed a pitch black space, a surge of chilling wind blowing out from within. As these high quality treasures had been stored here for too long, their cold and murderous aura had been bottled up.

“Apprentice Nephew Lin, what sort of treasures would you like to look at?”

“Spears!” Lin Ming said without any hesitation. Now when he fought masters, their treasure weapons were at least at the high-grade human-step rank. Not only that, but they were of the best quality within their grade; they weren't too far from an earth-step treasure.

In this sort of fight, the Heavy Profound Soft Spear was becoming increasingly weak. After the battle with Jiang Baoyun, even though Lin Ming had wrapped his spear in the protection of his true essence, there were still many sword cuts on his Heavy Profound Soft Spear.

If he met a stronger opponent in the future, his Heavy Profound Soft Spear might even be directly cut in half.

“Alright, come with me.” Liu Xuan brought Lin Ming to pass through rows of weapons on racks. Finally, they came to a small side room, and he opened the door. There was a room inside that was 100 feet wide and long.

Within were 10 rows of racks, with a wide range of spears set up on them. There were dark spears, bright silver spears, and all of their spearheads glowed with a dense cold, with a thick murderous air blowing off of them, causing the temperature in the room to drop by several degrees.

“In here.” Liu Xuan said.

Seeing so many treasure spears, Lin Ming sucked in a breath of cold air. Martial artists loved weapons – Lin Ming was no exception. There were many martial artists who had gathered collections of weapons they loved, even though they could only use one.

There were over several hundred different kinds of spears here. There were short spears, long spears, thick spears, thin spears, hard spears, bendable spears, an incomparable variety of spears.

However, as Lin Ming looked at them, he was a bit disappointed. These treasure spears were worse than the weapons outside. Most of them were at the medium-grade human-step, and there was a small rack of high-grade human-step spears. As for earth-step spears, there were only three in total.

Liu Xuan saw Lin Ming thinking and said, “The Seven Profound

Valleys doesn't have a faction that uses spears, so within all the generations of the Seven Profound Valleys' refiner masters, there were very few of them that forged spears. These spears here were mostly taken by the disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys and accumulated here over 600 years, all within this room. If you wish to choose a low-grade earth-step spear, then there are only three spears to choose from. In truth, of these three low-grade earth-step treasures, their quality is relatively at the bottom compared to other low-grade earth-step treasures."

Three spears, all of them at the lowest quality among earth-step treasures. Not only that, but as Lin Ming looked at these three spears, he discovered that they were actually all hard spears, none of them having elasticity. To him, this was unacceptable.

Not to mention that a hard spear would place extreme restrictions on his spear style, but the Flow like Silk he practiced had to have a flexible spear in order to display its greatest power.

Seeing that Lin Ming wasn't satisfied with these three spears, Liu Xuan said, "Apprentice Nephew Lin, I have a suggestion... Apprentice Nephew Lin is still young, it's not too late to switch over to using a sword. My Seven Profound Valleys happens to have a Sword Faction. If you join the Sword Faction, all of the core cultivation methods will be made available to you, and they also have many good treasures to choose from."

Listening to Liu Xuan's words, Lin Ming didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. For just an earth-step treasure, he would have to switch over to a third-grade sect's cultivation methods and cultivate the sword?

When Lin Ming had first chosen the spear as a weapon, it wasn't on a random whim. The cultivation method that he studied, the 'Chaotic Virtues Combat Meridians', was the most Yang and light-attributed of all cultivation methods. To display its true power, a spear was the best.

As for a swordsman, their emphasis was on speed, their sharp moves, and interchangeable styles. It clearly didn't suit him.

And Lin Ming also had the power of the True Dragon. 'Saber like tiger, spear like dragon', were not some random words. Among weapons, the spear's imposing and indomitable manner best fit the extreme force and extreme Yang energy of a dragon.

Lin Ming thought for a moment and then asked, "Elder Liu, if I provide materials, may I request the Refiner Faction seniors to forge an earth-step spear for me?"

"Mm? What materials?" Liu Xuan was doubtful. In order to create an earth-step treasure, one needed priceless materials. Lin Ming came from a civilian background, how would he possibly have any?

"Spear shaft materials." In creating a treasure spear, the most difficult and arduous part was the spear shaft. If Lin Ming could provide the materials for a spear shaft, creating a spearhead was no problem.

And that spear shaft material was the Violet Electricity Spirit

Bamboo that he had obtained from Thundercrash Mountain's Flood Dragon cave.

Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo.

At 90 years it would be a bamboo shoot, at 900 years a young bamboo, and at 9000 years a mature bamboo.

A mature Spirit Bamboo would be able to release bamboo shoots, and these bamboo shoots could sneak into magnetic ore, drilling their way in and hatching within.

At first, Lin Ming had found a 900 year old red bamboo in a mountain cavern, and then he had found the parent bamboo within the Flood Dragon's Cave.

That young bamboo was already 900 years old. That meant that this Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo that he had found was nine thousand nine hundred years in age. It was almost the same age as Thundercrash Mountain, which had existed for 10,000 years!

The Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo had the flexibility, and there was no need to mention how tough it was; 900 year old bamboo was already exceedingly difficult to damage with a saber or sword. As for 9900 year old bamboo, even an early Xiantian realm master would find it difficult to damage.

Such bamboo would become the highest grade material for a spear shaft. Especially since Lin Ming was a thunder-attribute

martial artist. The attribute and nature of the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo just happened to match him.

“Spear shaft material?” Liu Xuan was stunned. He hesitated and then said, “Whether a spear is good or bad mainly depends on its spearhead. As for these three spears’ shafts, in truth they aren’t too bad, there isn’t any need to forge another one. For instance, this spear shaft here is made with Aged Gold mixed with Cold Star Iron, and then refined with a Flame Essence. It was folded and hammered for nine periods of nine days for a total of 81 days. It has supreme power, even an extreme Xiantian master would find it difficult to destroy!”

Lin Ming said, “Elder Liu is correct. However, a spear’s quality doesn’t depend on just the spearhead, but also the spear shaft. Looking at these spear shafts, none of them are flexible, so they aren’t what I want.”

“You want a low-grade earth-step flexible spear?” Liu Xuan didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. As a refining master, he was aware of just how difficult it was to forge a low-grade earth-step flexible spear. Let alone making one as Lin Ming wished, even finding the materials themselves was a nigh impossible task.

As for the materials that were needed to create a low-grade earth-step flexible spear, Liu Xuan had never seen such materials; he had only read about their descriptions in the ancient texts.

With this near-idiotic request from Lin Ming, Liu Xuan was speechless. If Lin Ming were just some common disciple, then Liu Xuan would have already told him off. However, Lin Ming



currently had a very lofty status, it was best if he did his best to give him a convincing explanation.

“Apprentice Nephew Lin, you are not a refining master so you don’t understand how difficult it is to create a low-grade earth-step flexible spear. This sort of treasure would be several times more rare and expensive than the Zhang Family’s Blood Wave Saber! Our Seven Profound Valleys doesn’t have the necessary materials to forge one.”

Lin Ming said, “Elder Liu, I just said that I have the material.”

“What material do you have? Heavy Profound Soft Silver? Hundred Hammer Pure Gold?” Elder Liu casually listed two materials. These two materials were top quality materials in forging bows, staffs, and spears, but they still fell far short of being able to create an earth-step treasure.

Although Lin Ming’s talent was clearly heaven-defying, Liu Xuan still subconsciously thought that Lin Ming was just a little farm boy from a small town. Not only that, but he was very young. A mere 16 year old from a humble mortal background, just what sort of concepts would he have of an earth-step treasure? Lin Ming probably didn’t understand how difficult refining truly was, so he thought he could casually pull out some decent materials to create an earth-step treasure.

Lin Ming hesitated, not sure if he should tell Liu Xuan anything more. Well, since he was in the Seven Profound Valleys, as long as the other party wasn’t crazy, then they wouldn’t do something so foolish as killing someone to rob them of their property.

But at this moment, a small flame suddenly shined in front of Liu Xuan. It was a sound transmitting talisman. Liu Xuan was stunned. This sound transmission was actually from a Deputy Valley Master, and he had been ordered to immediately bring Lin Ming to the Seven Profound Valleys' Grand Hall, at the highest peak, where he would have an audience with the Saint Envoy of Divine Phoenix Island.

Why would someone with such a status come from Divine Phoenix Island? Liu Xuan thought to himself. He naturally knew what status this so-called Saint Envoy had. He said to Lin Ming, "Apprentice Nephew Lin, let's put this treasure selection off for now. First, we shall go to the highest peak and have an audience with the Divine Phoenix Island's Saint Envoy."

Divine Phoenix Island Saint Envoy? Lin Ming was stunned as soon as he heard this. The word 'saint' caused his heart to stir... surely it couldn't be...

Liu Xuan also tried to attempt his friendly persuasion, "Apprentice Nephew Lin, if you want to forge a flexible treasure spear, how can it be easy? Even if Valley Master Shi could collect the materials for you, who would there be to refine it? Our Refiner Faction has many masters who can create godly swords, but there are only a few who can refine spears. It is very difficult to be able to practice multiple things, what would happen if something went wrong?"

As soon as Liu Xuan said this, Lin Ming's heart was startled. He was right! No matter how good his materials were, if something

went wrong in the refining process, then it was useless. Then what should he do?

Right... would Divine Phoenix Island have a refining master? If they personally forged a weapon, its effects would probably be much better...

## Chapter 294 – Three Ranks Of Human, Earth, Heaven

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At this moment, Lin Ming had a very high need for a good spear. In his battle against Jiang Baoyun, he had been hard pressed by him, but eventually he overwhelmed Jiang Baoyun with his endurance, forcing him to make a final strike.

This was without a doubt partly due to Lin Ming's slow speed, but another reason was because the insufficient power of the Heavy Profound Soft Spear was unable to display the full power of the azure true essence. Especially against Jiang Baoyun's Black Crystal Sword, the difference was like heaven and earth.

If he could use the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo to make a low-grade earth-step treasure spear, then Lin Ming's combat strength would instantly experience a great leap, and his power of thunder would be much stronger. If he fought Jiang Baoyun again, it wouldn't be as onerous.

And after a few more days, Lin Ming would go to the Southern Wilderness and take the Eternal Flame Flame Essence. With the Flame Essence to assist the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo in creating a spear, it would be even more powerful.

As he thought this, the Heavenly Wind Eagle had already arrived at the Seven Profound Valleys' highest peak. Lin Ming jumped down from the eagle's back and walked to the entrance. In the Seven Profound Valleys, the eagles could not fly above the Grand Hall.

“I do say, Apprentice Nephew Lin, although as your Apprentice Uncle my achievements are far from comparable to yours, I still have many years of experience. A spear is powerful, but there are very few martial artists who practice the spear. As for martial artists who practice the sword, they are everywhere! Hehe, so what does this mean? This is proof that the sword is far superior to the spear. There is no way that so many people would be fools...” Liu Xuan jabbered endlessly as they walked together. In truth, he was using this as a way to comfort Lin Ming and showing that he cared for him in order to build a better relationship.

Lin Ming thought this was quite funny and simply didn't respond. Like this, the two of them arrived in front of the Grand Hall within the square.

At this point, there were many people already gathered at the square. He casually glanced over them, and found that Jiang Baoyun, Mugu Buyu, Qin Wuxin, and Jiang Lanjian were all here. Including himself, they were the top six ranks of this year's Total Faction Martial Meeting.

“Are they giving out the rewards?” Lin Ming thought. As he looked around, he saw many other youths who weren't dressed in the attire of the Seven Profound Valleys' disciples. Lin Ming didn't have any idea why these people were here.

“Lin Ming, over here!” Jiang Baoyun beckoned.

As Jiang Baoyun called out 'Lin Ming', the eyes of more than 20

people suddenly turned onto him, their vision just like sharp arrows.

Lin Ming paused, what the hell was going on?

“This boy is Lin Ming?”

“The rising star rookie who defeated Jiang Baoyun? Looking at his age... he’s probably 18 years old.”

“His age isn’t strange, but why when I look at him do I see an early Pulse Condensation cultivation? What is Jiang Baoyun doing? He actually lost to a boy at the early Pulse Condensation period? Is the Seven Profound Valleys tricking us?”

Among the more than 20 people, the ones who were familiar with each other were discussing Lin Ming using true essence sound transmission. Jiang Baoyun could be considered as having a stellar reputation. This year, he had managed to successively defeat four top talents of different sects, but now he actually lost to a boy at the early Pulse Condensation period. This caused them to suspect that the Seven Profound Valleys was messing with them.

“You are Lin Ming?”

A young man carrying a saber casually looked Lin Ming up and down, sizing him up as he spoke.

“That’s me.”

“I heard that you defeated Jiang Baoyun. Good. That gives you the qualifications to be my opponent. After this meeting ends, I will meet you at the foot of the Seven Profound Valleys’ grandest mountain. I want to challenge you!” The young man stroked his saber blade as he said this, appearing quite confident.

Lin Ming was speechless. Where did this fellow jump out of? Why was this fellow looking him up and down... was he an idiot?

At this moment, Jiang Baoyun used a sound transmission and said, “Lin Ming, this silly fellow is Zhang Shaoshan from the White Peak Sect, currently 20 years old. Last year I went to White Peak Sect to challenge him, and he narrowly defeated me. Now, my strength has sharply risen, and I already know in my heart that Zhang Shaoshan is no longer my match. If I fight with him, it won’t help my swordsmanship, therefore I didn’t go to White Peak Sect this year to waste my time.”

“I see.” Listening to Jiang Baoyun’s words, Lin Ming couldn’t help but admire Jiang Baoyun’s temperament. Normally, if a martial artist lost to anyone, then would usually return at some later day to place another challenge, if only to relieve their spirit so their true essence flowed freely. However, Jiang Baoyun didn’t care at all about whether he won or lost, and only wished to challenge superior masters in order to enhance his swordsmanship. After knowing that this fellow was completely inferior to himself, Jiang Baoyun didn’t pay him a second of interest.

Jiang Baoyun continued, “This Zhang Shaoshan isn’t too strong.

But among these people, there are some that even I am apprehensive about – they are very strong.”

Although Jiang Baoyun had a talent that defied the heavens and managed to defeated four top talents in succession this year, that didn't mean that he was the number one junior among all the neighboring third-grade sects younger generation.

Of those 20-something people present, there were already some who were 21 or 22 years old. Although their talent might be slightly worse than Jiang Baoyun's, because of the difference in age, they were actually stronger.

A youth who was already at the early Houtian realm looked at Lin Ming and said, “Lin Ming, I am Lin Ping from Peacock Mountain, we could said be barely related to each other because we share the same last name. I'm quite interested in you. I'm looking forward to your future growth. Two or three years later, you might have the qualifications to be my match. At that time, you can come to my Peacock Mountain and look for me to have a match.”

Lin Ping's words were filled with an extreme sense of confidence. However, he truly did have the qualifications to be confident. Lin Ping was only 21 years old, but his cultivation had already reached the early Houtian realm. Out of everyone present, he had the highest cultivation.

After Lin Ping and Zhang Shaoshan spoke, two more people challenged Lin Ming to a match. These sorts of battles between fellow genius disciples were encouraged by the largest sects. In order to improve, one had to constantly fight and learn from other



opponents. Some disciples with a naturally high perception might even gain insights from every battle.

But... while having a match wasn't strange, Lin Ming wondered just why all of these people came to look for him. Did he taunt them at some point?

At this point, Jiang Baoyun laughed, and smiled as he passed on another sound transmission, "Do you think it's strange that these people are all eyeing you like this? Divine Phoenix Island just presented a joint training program to raise talents. To be more specific, the greatest young talents of the 19 third-grade sects will be divided into three ranks: human, earth, and heaven. These people will be raised by Divine Phoenix Island and the sects.

"Each rank naturally gets different resources. Not only that, but the difference is great. Everyone wants to attain a higher rank and obtain more resources. As for Mu Qinghong complimenting you in front of the other sects' Elders... everyone here has been made aware of this matter..."

Lin Ming listened, silent. He just didn't have the words to respond. It seemed that even though he was lying down, he would still be struck by arrows! These third-grade sect talents, they were all full of arrogance and pride. They refused to believe that anyone was above them. Although Jiang Baoyun had defeated four top talents, and Lin Ming himself had defeated Jiang Baoyun, these talented disciples who were full of confidence didn't believe that the rest of them would be defeated by Jiang Baoyun.

Who was strong, who was weak; all would be made clear in

battle.

Jiang Baoyun saw Lin Ming's speechless expression, and laughed, "The truth is, those people who jumped out at you – besides Lin Ping – aren't that strong. Those that are genuinely strong haven't made a sound yet; they don't believe that they would lose to you. Everyone's aiming for that heaven-step talent spot. After one is evaluated as a heaven-step talent, then they will enjoy treatment that is equal to being a core disciple of Divine Phoenix Island. Not only that, but they will be able to stay for a long time at Divine Phoenix Island."

"Oh? Core disciple treatment?" Lin Ming was surprised, and then he asked through a true essence sound transmission with some confusion, "Why would Divine Phoenix Island propose a joint training program? This doesn't have any advantage for them, right? Why would they want to raise other people's children with their own rice?"

Jiang Baoyun shook his head and replied, "I'm not too clear about this. For these last two days, Divine Phoenix Island has invited the elders of the largest sects to come here and discuss something. There is probably something very big happening soon."

At this time, an impatient voice interrupted Lin Ming and Jiang Baoyun's true essence sound transmission.

"Lin Ming, are you a little girl or something? Do you not dare to fight me?" After being completely ignored by Lin Ming, Zhang Shaoshan looked extremely unhappy.

“Sorry, I’m not interested.” Lin Ming plainly replied. Since Jiang Baoyun had said this youth was weak, he naturally didn’t want to waste his time on him.

“You...!” Zhang Shaoshan was just about to act, when suddenly a spirit boat appeared in the sky above the Grand Hall’s square. As the spirit boat flew down, Lin Ming could see over 20 Xiantian masters onboard. As Lin Ming narrowed his eyes, he saw that among these masters were the Seven Profound Valleys’ Valley Masters and Deputy Valley Masters. There were also some other people who were wearing different attire than what the Seven Profound Valleys’ elders would wear. These were obviously elders from the other 19 third-grade sects.

With so many third-grade sect core disciples and elders gathered together in the Seven Profound Valleys, and also creating a joint training program for geniuses, just what was happening here?

After the many Xiantian masters flew down and seated themselves, there was a slight sound of fluttering clothes and a gorgeously graceful woman with a heavenly figure floated downwards. She wore a flame-colored fairy dress, and silver silk ribbons fluttered in the wind behind her like thin wings. Her smooth inky black hair was coiffed into a noble phoenix swirl, and her beautiful face was filled with an incomparably tranquil atmosphere. She was just like a divine goddess who was regarding the mortal world.

Lin Ming paused a bit. This woman was Mu Qianyu. He already had a faint guess in his heart of who this would be, therefore he

wasn't too surprised.

When they had met in the jungles of the Southern Wilderness, Lin Ming had seen Mu Qianyu's disposition that was just like a young maiden's. But as for the current Mu Qianyu, she was just like a divine saintess. She had a noble manner that made it hard to look up at her.

As for the other disciples around Lin Ming, many of them were staring at her with wide eyes. It wasn't difficult to know why they were in such a sad state. After all, Mu Qianyu could be described as one of the most beautiful and elegant woman within the South Horizon Region, and she exuded an otherworldly feeling, free of mortal foibles. Coupled with her superior and haughty status, this inevitably caused people to go crazy with ideas of conquering her nobility and beauty.

Although these core disciples of large sects had amazing talent, their cultivation in the end wasn't too high, and they didn't seem to have an incomparably firm heart of martial arts like Lin Ming did, or a Sword Heart like Jiang Baoyun did. Therefore there were many people who had turned dazed upon seeing Mu Qianyu. Thankfully, the majority of them were able to quickly readjust their thoughts.

But there was a small minority, such as the Acacia Faction's Ouyang Ming, who cultivated the 'Divine Acacia Power', that found it exceedingly difficult to adjust themselves.

In addition, there was also that Zhang Shaoshan who had challenged Lin Ming. He was staring at Mu Qianyu with a look of

fascination, his cheeks colored red with infatuation. He was thinking about how nice it would be if he was chosen as a heaven-step talent who could stay within Divine Phoenix Island. Thinking this, Zhang Shaoshan's heart began to burn. If he could live at Divine Phoenix Island, would he be able to see this fairy maiden every day?

# Chapter 295 – Heaven-Step Talent

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After Mu Qianyu flew down, the other third-grade sect elders and Sovereigns rose up and bowed. The difference between them and Mu Qianyu was the same as the difference between Qin Ziya and the Seven Profound Valleys' Valley Master; there was a massive gap separating them.

After all, in less than ten years, Mu Qianyu would definitely step into the Revolving Core realm, and her future potential would be limitless. As for the others present, they would most likely stop at the Xiantian realm, it would be difficult for them to break through to the Revolving Core realm for the rest of their lives.

Mu Qianyu glanced at all the talented geniuses gathered at the square, and her eyes stopped on Lin Ming for an extremely brief period before continuing. She continued to look over everyone else, not showing any difference in expression.

It was only when Mu Qianyu had sat down in the seat of honor did the other elders sit back down. The disciples in the square couldn't help but guess what was happening. Such a massive group of legends and important figures had been gathered here; just what was this plan of proposing a joint training program, and what was it for?

Although they didn't know who Mu Qianyu was, they did know that she came from Divine Phoenix Island, and was a very important character. It was possible that she was even a top-level existence who would be the next successor of Divine Phoenix Island. In the surrounding several million miles, Divine Phoenix

Island was the only fourth-grade sect. It could be said that Divine Phoenix Island controlled a good third of Sky Spill Continent's South Horizon Region. What Mu Qianyu's majestic status was could only be imagined.

At this time, Shi Zongtian acted as the spokesman and walked in front of the square, speaking to the core disciples of all the sects. "Today, all of you apprentice nephews have arrived here because there are two matters to announce. The first matter is about Silent Demon Emperor City!"

"Silent Demon Emperor City?"

To those disciples present, this name was a bit strange and unfamiliar. What they didn't know was that in every sect's ancient texts, there existed records of Silent Demon Emperor City.

This was a Holy Land rank sect that was established over 3000 years ago, and was also a top fifth-grade sect.

In the entirety of Sky Spill Continent, there continued to only be a handful of Holy Lands.

The main difference between a Holy Land and a normal fifth-grade sect was that a Holy Land rank sect would often last for over 10,000 years. However, Silent Demon Emperor City was an exception.

The Netherworld Great Emperor who established Silent Demon

Emperor City was a man who practiced the Devil Arts. The path of martial arts was slow and difficult, there were many people who weren't willing to put in the time and effort to gradually traverse this path. They would rather take a shortcut. For instance, techniques such as Star Absorbing Great Law, Energy Melting Great Law, or cultivation methods that required one to violate men or women, all of these were techniques that belonged to the Devil Arts.

The Netherworld Great Emperor had committed all sorts of hideous and villainous crimes in cultivating his Devil Arts. He had killed countless men and women, and had simultaneously taken the outstandingly talented and beautiful girls captive, violating them. These actions of his had spurred massive public fury.

Afterwards, his martial arts became nearly unrivalled in the world. Finally, he almost encroached upon a daughter of a Sky Spill Continent emperor. This had aroused the full wrath of the emperor, and he had paid a steep price in order to request several other emperors of Sky Spill Continent to team together and execute this Southern Demon. With the Netherworld Great Emperor's death, Silent Demon Emperor City also fell apart.

From beginning to end, Silent Demon Emperor City hadn't even existed for 2000 years. It had only been 1000 years since its collapse. However, Silent Demon Emperor City hadn't been fully eradicated. Originally, the Netherworld Great Emperor had 36 Devil Generals subordinate to him. Of these 36 Devil Generals, eight of them had managed to survive and escape far away to the South Sea. They gathered some of the other former minions of Silent Demon Emperor City together, and created the South Sea Demon Region.



As soon as the Netherworld Great Emperor died, the Sky Spill Continent Emperor had lost a great deal of support, and had enough trouble on his hands. Therefore the South Sea Demon Region was allowed to continue existing.

Over the years, the South Sea Demon Region developed more, and began to stir. They weren't willing to stay so far away from the mainland in the deep sea. But if they did come back, they would have to cross a big barrier that served as their greatest hurdle – the immortal island that was located offshore in the South Sea, Divine Phoenix Island.

The truth was, the South Sea Demon Region had long coveted and salivated over Divine Phoenix Island. Divine Phoenix Island had mostly women cultivators. Because the South Sea Demon Region practiced the Devil Arts, they lacked the talented and beautiful girls that were necessary to serve as their cultivation stoves. If they could annex Divine Phoenix Island, not only would they obtain a massive amount of resources, but they would also obtain many charmingly beautiful women that were equally talented. What could be more perfect than this?

The South Sea Demon Region was barely able to be considered a fifth-grade sect. Still, their strength was far more formidable than Divine Phoenix Island.

And so, Divine Phoenix Island now faced its greatest crisis since it was founded.

Before, Mu Qinghong had asked Mu Qianyu to come not only to observe Lin Ming, but also to probe into the Seven Profound Valleys and Peacock Mountain, and test these third-grade sects to see if they could resist the South Sea Demon Region together. Since they shared a common enemy, this should be easy for them to understand.

After Mu Qianyu arrived, her probing turned into a direct implantation of her plans. She planned to unite the 19 neighboring third-grade sects in order to resist the South Sea Demon Region. Of course, Divine Phoenix Island would also pay a price corresponding to their sincerity. Thus, the joint training program for talents was created with the backing of Divine Phoenix Island.

Shi Zongtian was brief and concise in his explanation of events. After he finished, he continued to say, “In order to resist the threat of the South Sea Demon Region together, us 19 third-grade sects and Divine Phoenix Island have decided to join in solidarity and cross this river together on the same boat. To cooperate and raise these talents together is also an important plan. This is the second matter I wish to announce today.”

“Of the core disciples in the 19 third-grade sects, there are altogether 108 that are selected to enter into this joint training program. These 108 individuals will be divided into three ranks: human, earth, and heaven. First, I will announce the human-step disciples on the list. There are 50 people. They are...”

“Seven Profound Valleys’ Jiang Lanjian, Ouyang Ming. Peacock Mountain’s Sun Yuwen, Zhou Guang...”

Currently, there were only 20-something disciples present. Most of the people on the list could not arrive due to time reasons. Those that were here already knew that they were candidates listed on the joint training program, and were expecting that their talent grade would be high. But now, many of them had already been directly classified into the lowest human-step

Those whose names were called showed a look of deep expression. They didn't feel very convinced. There hadn't even been a tournament, how could they have possibly been classified in the lowest grade?

White Peak Sect's Zhang Shaoshan tensely clenched his fists in nervousness. He had absolute belief in his own talent and abilities, but what he feared was that Divine Phoenix Island's investigation hadn't been thorough and didn't properly assess his talent, then place him into the lowest human-step grade. Like this, he would truly be wronged.

However, as Shi Zongtian read the White Peak Sect disciples' names, his name wasn't called.

Zhang Shaoshan let out a long breath of relief, feeling a bit more satisfied with himself. It seemed that Divine Phoenix Island did have some judgement after all. Well, his talent should at least be at the earth-step, and maybe even heaven-step. This would all depend on how many individuals could be placed in the heaven-step grade.

However, thinking that those from Divine Phoenix Island favored Li Ming, Zhang Shaoshan didn't feel too well. Lin Ming's 'sorry, I'm not interested' that he said a while ago had really

caused Zhang Shaoshan to lose face, and he had taken that insult to heart, brooding over it.

Zhang Shaoshan subconsciously clenched his fists, ‘You actually look down on me, but just you wait, I will show you how fierce I am!’

Shi Zongtian continued to say, “Now I will list the earth-step talents. There are a total of 27 individuals. They are Seven Profound Valleys’ Jiang Baoyun, Mugu Buyu. Peacock Mountain’s Lin Ping, Yan Gu, Zhou Ze. Falling Cloud Sect’s...”

As Shi Zongtian read the names one at a time, those present were confused. There were only 27 names on the earth-step talent list?

If there was a total of 108 people, and there were 50 in the human-step and 27 in the earth-step, then altogether that was only 77 people. Did the heaven-step list have 31 people? There were four more than on the earth-step list?

Many people were very excited as they thought this; it seemed there was a high chance of being chosen as a heaven-step talent. Especially those whose names hadn’t been called yet, they were excited to the point of disbelief. They were chosen as heaven-step talents? That even exceeded the Seven Profound Valleys’ Jiang Baoyun and Peacock Mountain’s Lin Ping!

Zhang Shaoshan was incomparably nervous at this time. As Shi Zongtian read the names from the Seven Profound Valleys, Lin Ming’s name hadn’t been listed. It seemed that this fellow was

really a lucky dog, and had been chosen as a heaven-step talent. If he wasn't selected, then what would he do?

‘If there were only a dozen or so selected for the heaven-step rank talent, then I wouldn't be surprised if I wasn't chosen. But since there are 31 people being chosen, then I absolutely have been selected! If I'm not chosen, then I will stand up and challenge that heaven-step talent!’

‘As long as I win, I can shut everyone up.’

Thinking this, Zhang Shaoshan let out a long breath, his heart finally settling down.

Finally, Shi Zongtian finished without reading Zhang Shaoshan's name. This caused Zhang Shaoshan to feel completely relieved.

‘It seems that Divine Phoenix Island has good judgement and didn't misjudge me. But as for Jiang Baoyun, Lin Ping, and even Falling Cloud Sect's Bai Shuxuan, was there a mistake?’

‘Those few people should have been chosen as heaven-step talents.’

The 19 third-grade sects didn't communicate much with each other, therefore Zhang Shaoshan only understood the strength of a few people here. To his knowledge, Lin Ping and Bai Shuxuan were both top-class talents of their sects. Lin Ping had stepped into the Houtian realm when he was 21 years old, and his talent was much

higher than Zhang Shaoshans'. As for Jiang Baoyun, he too was just a bit weaker than him, but could be comparable to his own junior-apprentice brother. If his own junior-apprentice brothers could be selected as heaven-step rank talents, then how come Jiang Baoyun couldn't?

As Zhang Shaoshan felt that something was wrong, Shi Zongtian continued to say, "As for these talents that are between the human-step and earth-step talent ranks, because of a lack of information, it is difficult to define their grades. So, there is need for additional assessment. There are a total of 30 people. These 30 are: the Seven Profound Valleys' Qin Wuxin..."

"What?"

These words of Shi Zongtian had directly turned Zhang Shaoshan into an idiot. There were 30 people whose talents were between the human-step and earth-step, and there were also 77 others. Altogether, this was 107 people.

Did that mean there was only one heaven-step talent!?

Before he had more time to think who this could be, Shi Zongtian called his name – White Peak Sect's Zhang Shaoshan.

Zhang Shaoshan's mind exploded. Did Shi Zongtian say something wrong? He had actually chosen him, this father, as someone who was between the human-step talent and earth-step talent? There were 28 individuals chosen as earth-step talents and heaven-step talents, and yet he hadn't been of them? A supreme

genius such as himself had been overlooked!?!?

Zhang Shaoshan couldn't accept this. In fact, it wasn't only him, there were several other people who couldn't accept this. They thought that they would be chosen as heaven-step talents, but didn't think they would actually only be earth-step talent candidates!

These disciples suddenly felt extremely unconvinced of the legitimacy of these decisions.

As for those whose grade wasn't chosen yet, they rarely fought with the geniuses of other sects. Therefore, there was a lack of information in deciding where they would be. These geniuses always had a proud heart and arrogant demeanor; they hadn't even fought, so why would they concede so easily? Jiang Baoyun had certainly won against some others, but could this Jiang Baoyun defeat them?

As for this Mugu Buyu, what the hell?

They hadn't even heard of him before!

And what was most irritating was that in this group of 108 talents, there was only a single heaven-step talent. They hadn't even fought this person yet, so why would they be inferior?

## Chapter 296 – I Do Not Accept

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When Shi Zongtian finished reading this list of 30 names, Zhang Shaoshan took the lead and said, “Valley Master Shi! I have a question!”

Shi Zongtian frowned as he was interrupted. He asked in a low voice, “What is it?”

“I would like to know who evaluates the talent rank? And what is the basis for this evaluation?”

Shi Zongtian said, “The names of the talent list were decided by Fairy Maiden Qinghong, and an elder from Divine Phoenix Island. They evaluated the results of these past years’ Martial Meetings of every sect!”

“Then this is a list that was comprised from the various Sovereigns and elders of the sects? I haven’t even challenged most of these people, isn’t the conclusion of my talent just too biased!?”

Zhang Shaoshan’s public denouncement of Divine Phoenix Island’s judgement could be considered extremely rude. But he was also voicing the thoughts and emotions of many other people.

“What a tournament tests is strength. As for this list of names, we are not looking at strength, only talent! As for those 30 people for which there isn’t enough information, we shall reexamine them and then decide where they belong.”



“But...”

Before Zhang Shaoshan could speak any further, Mu Qinghong coldly humphed and said, “You. If you feel unsatisfied with our decision, then you can choose to not participate in this joint training program. Do not forget, the resources of this program are provided by my Divine Phoenix Island. As for who we grant it to and why, it is all decided by my Divine Phoenix Island’s authority! It is not for little outsiders to think they can mess with! If you find it unfair, then you may leave!”

As Mu Qinghong spoke, there was true essence fused into her voice, causing an extremely intensely oppressive feeling. Zhang Shaoshan immediately paled and drew backwards several steps. He bit his lips, not speaking. Since he was in others’ house, he had to bow his head. No one was willing to not take these resources. Not only that, but they were resources from Divine Phoenix Island; they were most likely much better than anything he could obtain from his own sect.

At this moment, Shi Zongtian continued to speak, “Now I will announce the final heaven-step talent list. There a single person. This is... the Seven Profound Valleys’ Lin Ming!”

As Shi Zongtian’s words came out, Lin Ming suddenly felt the air around him becoming stifling, as countless eyes suddenly turned to look at him, their vision as cold as the icy tips of a sword. Except for Jiang Baoyun, Qin Wuxin, and the others from the Seven Profound Valleys, everyone else was looking at him as if they could devour him.

Zhang Shaoshan's eyes were red. This was jealousy, and this was also the blocking of his 'spirit'.

A heaven-step talent could enjoy treatment equal to a core disciple of Divine Phoenix Island! It was said that core disciples of Divine Phoenix Island could practice with medium-grade true essence stones. A medium-grade true essence stone was worth 100 normal pure true essence stones! Even if it was Zhang Shaoshan's father, he absolutely wouldn't be willing to cultivate with medium-grade true essence stones. This was simply burning away money!

In addition, a heaven-step talent could stay at Divine Phoenix Island. Divine Phoenix Island was comprised of 90% women. Not only that, but they were the most talented, beautiful, and proud maidens! Even though no one dared to show any impropriety towards someone like Mu Qianyu, if they could befriend a woman at the Xiantian realm or above and become her companion, they would be able to cultivate with her. This was a fate that could only be found and not searched for!

Thinking that so many good things had all fallen upon Lin Ming, Zhang Shaoshan's eyes were so red with fury and jealousy that they looked as if they were on fire. But as Shi Zongtian continued to speak, the resentment in his heart was pushed to the extreme.

Shi Zongtian said, "Every month, a human-step talent will receive 500 low-grade true essence stones, and once they reach the late Houtian realm, they will obtain one Heaven Opening Pill.

“Every month, an earth-step talent will receive 500 low-grade true essence stones, five medium-grade true essence stones, and after reaching the middle Houtian realm, they will obtain two Heaven Opening Pills.

“Every month, a heaven-step talent will receive 20 medium-grade true essence stones, and immediately receive one Heaven Opening Pill. After reaching the Houtian realm, they will receive two Heaven Opening Pills. They may also venture into the Divine Phoenix Mystic Realm to adventure, and will also receive a low-grade earth-step flexible armor as a gift.”

Those last words caused the entire crowd to go into an uproar. The disparity between them was just too great! The difference between them and a heaven-step talent was like a flea-ridden beggar following behind a gilded prince!

In comparison, not even mentioning the medium-grade true essence stones, but a heaven-step talent would also receive three Heaven Opening Pills. These could immediately be taken to increase one’s cultivation! Not only that, but they could also enter the Divine Phoenix Mystic Realm! Although no one knew just what this Divine Phoenix Mystic Realm was, it didn’t take a genius to know that this was some incredible and incomparably valuable place. Maybe only core disciples of Divine Phoenix Island could enter! Also, there was the low-grade earth-step flexible armor. The value of that was just inestimable. It had to be known that armor was normally much more expensive than weapons of the same grade. And a flexible armor was one of the most expensive kind!

This was just too unfair!

Several people immediately stood up and said, “Seniors, we have words we wish to say!”

These people were all disciples that were grouped together with Zhang Shaoshan on the earth-step waiting list. These individuals usually hid their strength and rarely participated in battles between geniuses. Still, they all had their own respective trump cards, and were absolutely confident in their abilities. Since they hadn’t fought anyone yet, they refused to take this loss sitting down.

As for those 27 individuals that were truly chosen into the earth-step list, because they often participated in battles between geniuses, they naturally knew just where their abilities lay. Since they saw that Lin Ping from Peacock Mountain hadn’t even made a sound, they naturally wouldn’t speak up.

“What do you have to say?” Mu Qinghong asked, her words somewhat cold.

“Senior, if our assessment results are amazing enough, can we qualify to become a heaven-step talent?” A man with upturned eyebrows asked.

Mu Qinghong’s eyes swept past his person. He was around 20 years old, and his cultivation was still stuck at the peak Pulse Condensation period.

‘Humph, the toad truly thinks he can eat swan meat. He actually

thinks he can be a heaven-step talent! Hilarious! When Young Mistress Qianyu was 17 years old, she was already a Houtian master. When she was 22 years old, she stepped into the Xiantian realm!’

If it wasn’t for the fact that Divine Phoenix Island needed to unite these small sects, then if these people were placed in Divine Phoenix Island, they just wouldn’t be worthy of investing any efforts in.

Mu Qinghong was about to reject the ridiculous requests of these people, when at this moment Mu Qianyu actually spoke up. “You can qualify as a heaven-step talent, as long as you pass the seventh floor of the Seven Treasures Exquisite Pagoda.”

Within the Sky Spill Continent, the Seven Treasures Exquisite Pagoda was the general illusory magic array that was used to test the talents of individuals. When Lin Ming had first participated in the Seven Profound Martial House entrance examination, he had also gone up this pagoda, passed the fourth floor and was stopped at the fifth. As for the sixth-grade talent Qin Xingxuan, she had passed the fifth floor.

As for the sixth and seventh floor, each of these had an exponential level of growth in difficulty. To rush past the seventh floor was nigh impossible.

“What? Pass the seventh floor?”

The several youths that stood up suddenly had very ugly

complexions. How could they ever manage to pass through the seventh floor? Wasn't this just making fun of them?

Of course, they dared not say this.

"I want to know, as long as one is a heaven-step talent, they have the ability to pass the seventh floor?" The youth with upturned eyebrows asked, his eyes glancing at Lin Ming. The implied meaning of suspicion was obvious.

This youth acknowledged that Lin Ming truly did have superior and outstanding talent, but he didn't believe that Lin Ming could actually pass the seventh floor.

In fact, Lin Ming didn't have absolute faith that he could pass through the Exquisite Pagoda's seventh floor. Sky Spill Continent's general talent test Seven Treasures Exquisite Pagoda was not the same as the Sorcerer Holy Land which he passed.

"Several Seniors, I wish to challenge those geniuses on the earth-step list and heaven-step list. As long as the age difference isn't too great, then those who win naturally have a higher talent! Isn't that right!?"

Mu Qianyu smiled without saying a word. As for those other sects' elders, different looks flashed on their faces; obviously, they each had their own thoughts on the matter.

The truth was that they weren't satisfied with the lists that

Divine Phoenix Island had compiled. There were many talents that didn't expose their final trump cards and show their true strength. If one simply judged them by looking at the surface, it would simply create many inaccuracies.

Not only that, but the name list judged the Seven Profound Valleys to be very high. The Seven Profound Valleys was only in the middle of the pack of the 19 third-grade sects. Finally, only Lin Ming was chosen as the heaven-step talent. And, there was also Jiang Baoyun and Mugu Buyu who were chosen as earth-step talents. And Qin Wuxin was an earth-step talent candidate. This was even better than Peacock Mountain!

If this was only because Mu Qinghong had personally watched the Seven Profound Valleys' Total Faction Martial Meeting and thus they received such a high evaluation, then they wouldn't be convinced. She hadn't even come to see their own Martial Meetings, so why were they listed as inferior?

Mu Qianyu smiled, nodding, and said, "If you cannot wait for an official assessment, then you may begin your challenges now."

Mu Qianyu's voice just fell when Zhang Shaoshan took a fierce step forwards, and loudly shouted, "Lin Ming, I challenge you!"

Everyone's eyes turned to look at Lin Ming, especially the disciples of White Peak Sect, they were anticipating this good show. They were very clear just how strong Zhang Shaoshan was. Last year, even Jiang Baoyun had been defeated under his hand! Lin Ming might be strong, but even he would find it difficult to defeat Zhang Shaoshan!

Lin Ming casually crossed his arms, sizing up Zhang Shaoshan. He calmly said, “I just turned 16 years old a little bit ago. How old are you?”

“Wha... what?” These few words had turned Zhang Shaoshan silly. Lin Ming had just reached 16 years of age? He thought that Lin Ming was around 18 years old or so – how could he possibly be 16 years old? A 16 year old actually defeated Jiang Baoyun? Not only that, but his cultivation was only at the early Pulse Condensation period. Was this for real?

Zhang Shaoshan couldn’t believe this. He was already 20 years old. In any case, this four year gap between them had already lost him any qualifications to challenge Lin Ming.

At this moment, Mugu Buyu suddenly cynically laughed, “Jejejeje, little baby boy, let me play with you. If you can defeat me, then you might be able to take a few moves from this little boy’s hand. How about it?”

Mugu Buyu pointed a withered finger towards Lin Ming as he said this. The ‘little boy’ that he spoke of was naturally Lin Ming. That Lin Ming could actually convince this normally proud and stubborn Mugu Buyu, could also be said to be a testament to Lin Ming’s fearless strength.

And who the hell was this?

Zhang Shaoshan was already furious from shame. Even if he



didn't have the qualifications because of his age, he should at least battle Jiang Baoyun. Did this strange mummy fellow actually think he was worthy of challenging him?

“Good! Then I am much obliged!” Zhang Shaoshan spoke with his heart bursting with rage.

‘Some unknown mummy fellow from the Seven Profound Valleys dares to challenge me! If I don't show some cards in my hand, then you won't know how high the heavens are, and how deep the earth is!’

Mu Qianyu calmly smiled and said, “Who else would like to challenge?”

“I'll challenge!” The youth with upturned eyebrows said. He was 19 years old — equally unqualified to challenge Lin Ming.

Jiang Baoyun slowly stood up, taking the sword case off his back. He said, “My age is similar to yours. I will be your match, I shouldn't be unworthy of you.”

The youth with upturned eyebrows looked at Jiang Baoyun and nodded. He wanted to challenge Lin Ming, but Jiang Baoyun was good enough.

The arena was readied. There would be two matches, First, Mugu Buyu against Zhang Shaoshan.

“Hehe.” Mugu Buyu slyly smiled. The bag on his back suddenly shook, and a flaming puppet jumped out, its entire body wreathed in deep red flames.

Lin Ming’s eyebrows rose. It had only been ten days, and yet this Evil Fire God puppet was repaired? It seemed that the Puppet Faction Sovereign had personally repaired it...

## Chapter 297 – Between Cloud And Mud

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All the other sects' elders looked at Mugu Buyu, puzzled. Just where did this little kid come from?

According to the information they received, during the Seven Profound Valleys' Total Faction Martial Meeting, Lin Ming had been ranked first, and Jiang Baoyun was most likely second. As for this fellow who looked like a dried up mummy, he was third.

The Seven Profound Valleys' third ranked disciple had come out to challenge White Peak Sect's chief disciple, Zhang Shaoshan?

White Peak Sect's elder grunted. Although his White Peak Sect was ranked tenth out of the 18 third-grade sects, they still weren't much different from the Seven Profound Valleys – their strength was about the same. But now, the Seven Profound Valleys' third ranked disciple had actually come out to challenge their chief disciple, this was just looking down on them too much.

It had to be known that the Seven Profound Valleys' Jiang Baoyun had come to White Peak Sect last year to challenge them, but had been defeated by Zhang Shaoshan!

Not just that, but the talent list that Divine Phoenix Island drew up had caused the White Peak Sect elder to fume with self-righteous anger. There were 27 earth-step talents, and 17 of those spots had been taken by the six top third-grade sects, which included Peacock Mountain. He couldn't say anything about that, but of those 10 measly leftover sports, two of them had been

dominated by the Seven Profound Valleys, leaving only eight spots left over for 12 sects to share. White Peak Sect actually hadn't even been given a spot! Zhang Shaoshan had only been listed as a possible earth-step candidate.

Divine Phoenix Island had only come to watch this Seven Profound Valleys' Total Faction Martial Meeting, thus they made this sort of arbitrary judgement; how could the White Peak Sect elder be satisfied with this?

'Shaoshan has made a great deal of progress this year, and he also has two ultimate finishing moves. These are things that Divine Phoenix Island and the Seven Profound Valleys have no idea of. Now, I will let you have a look at just how strong my White Peak Sect's chief disciple is!'

As the White Peak Sect elder thought this, he maintained his calm and indifferent composure. He unhurriedly picked up a bowl of wine, watching the match on the martial stage from the corners of his eyes. He had a very confident appearance, as if he didn't worry about Zhang Shaoshan's competition.

On the martial stage, Mugu Buyu had summoned his Scarlet Gold Tortoise puppet and the Great Alligator puppet. As for the spider puppet, that was missing – it probably hadn't been repaired yet.

Zhang Shao crossed his arms across his chest, coldly looking at Mugu Buyu. As a top master, he naturally had to have the style and verve of an apex master. Letting his opponent make adequate preparations was one of the most essential aspects of showing off one's skill as an apex master.

“Are you finally ready? Make your move. I’ll let you have three moves. With three moves, I shall see whether or not you can force my sword!” Zhang Shaoshan mockingly said.

“Jejejeje, little baby boy, I think you are already stupid to the point of being more idiotic than my puppets.” Mugu Buyu gave a shrieking cry, and his skeleton creaked as two large flesh ridges appeared behind him, constantly moving.

Zhang Shaoshan’s complexion changed, just what was this thing?

Pah! Pah!

With two light sounds, those fleshy lumps on Mugu Buyu’s back turned into a pair of arms. As Zhang Shaoshan saw this, his eyes went perfectly round. This mummy fellow actually had arms on his back? Was this fellow... a human?

“You can die now!”

Mugu Buyu weirdly cried out, shrinking into the Scarlet Gold Tortoise. Then, four weapons popped out, extending from the holes in the Scarlet Gold Tortoise. At the same time, the Evil Fire God flourished a sword of burning fire, chopping down at Zhang Shaoshan!

Flames billowed, the overwhelming heat wave covered the sky and turned the tiles into lava. Zhang Shaoshan’s expression

completely changed; this was a terrifying level of heat!

Ka!

A sword split apart the arena floor. Zhang Shaoshan awkwardly dodged the blade, however, the raging fire that was supported by nine Hollow Flame Essences was too fierce. The waves of fire directly melted away Zhang Shaoshan's true essence protection, lighting his clothes on fire and burning off his eyebrows.

“How is this possible!?”

Clang!

The treasure sword left its sheath, all of Zhang Shaoshan's previously boastful demeanor was gone. With sword in hand, he hadn't even had time to put out the fire when Mugu Buyu had already rushed ahead!

“You really think I can't do anything!?” Zhang Shaoshan's lips panned up in a cruel smile. As a swordsman, his greatest advantage was naturally his attack power.

Currently, his heart was raging with anger. Because he was too careless a moment ago, Mugu Buyu's move had actually caused his to panic, embarrassing him. His clothes had been burned by a nobody, this was simply an unforgivable insult!

“White Peak 13 Swords!”

Zhang Shaoshan gave a loud cry, directly using his greatest master move, wanting to defeat Mugu Buyu in one stroke and recover the face he lost. However, he didn't expect that facing his fierce attack, Mugu Buyu would not only not dodge, but rush straight towards his sword!

Bang!

With a deafening explosion, Zhang Shaoshan's sword had pierced through Mugu Buyu's pure golden shell. At that same time, Mugu Buyu's four weapons cut towards Zhang Shaoshan!

“You want to perish together? You think you can?”

As a swordsman, Zhang Shaoshan was naturally more agile than Mugu Buyu. After he pulled back his sword, he used the force of the recoil to rapidly retreat, escaping from Mugu Buyu's attack.

A single blade had solved his opponent while he perfectly dodged the opponent's final dying counter attack. With this, Zhang Shaoshan's face was glowing with content; he had finally recovered his face. However, in a split-second, his happy face froze.

He suddenly felt as if his body was being pulled down by an invisible force, as if his body was made from lead! This was the special ability of the Great Alligator Puppet – Devouring!

“What is this?”

Zhang Shaoshan was greatly surprised. He didn't have time to think as he heard the sounds of howling flames coming from his side. He turned his head to look, the Evil Fire God was already cutting down on him!

Damn!

As his body felt like it was stuck in quicksand, Zhang Shaoshan had no chance of evading. He cut out with his sword, meeting this strike head-on!

Bang!

Flame exploded, and his sword move was broken, true essence waves rushing out. Zhang Shaoshan was a swordsman, so his defense was never very good. Before, the Evil Fire God's strike had almost shattered the martial stage's protective array formation, so how could he defend against it?

Pu!

As the power of fire entered his body, Zhang Shaoshan was just like a broken kite as he flew backwards, his organs injured and his blood churning in reverse. He wanted to spit out blood, but he forcefully swallowed it back down, causing his injuries to worsen.

In dealing with some nobody, Zhang Shaoshan would rather



aggravate his injuries than lose face by vomiting blood.

“I was too careless. This fellow was really hard to deal with. However, he has already been struck by my White Peak 13 Swords – he’s done for.”

White Peak 13 Swords was Zhang Shaoshan’s strongest sword skill, he had never missed. Though he had been a bit embarrassed, for better or for worse, he had used a sword to defeat his enemy, so in the end he hadn’t lost too much face.

But, just as Zhang Shaoshan thought he had already won, he suddenly heard the sound of wind whistling beneath him. He looked down and saw four hands carrying four different weapons, and a giant golden turtle coming straight towards him. That shining golden shell didn’t even have a single scratch.

“How... how is this possible!?”

Zhang Shaoshan’s eyes widened like eggs. In the air, there was no leverage for him to move, and he had been seriously wounded. His true essence was chaotic, and he couldn’t use another powerful sword skill again. Like this, he was just a target to be aimed at.

In the next moment, there was a muffled ‘peng’ sound, as Mug Buyu raised his sickle and smashed down on Zhang Shaoshan in midair, just like a ball!

Bang!

Zhang Shaoshan smashed against the floor just like a broken sack of rice, half of his body stuck in the tiles. The other sects' core disciples and elders were dumbfounded by this. How did this happen?

Although no one believed that Zhang Shaoshan was some once-in-a-lifetime talent, he was still the chief disciple of White Peak Sect. Yet he had been defeated by a nobody, and in such a miserable manner.

From start to end, Mugu Buyu had only used five moves. The Evil Fire God puppet's attack power was too abnormally strong. Zhang Shaoshan could not dodge it, and a single blow sent his sword flying away. As for that golden shell around Mugu Buyu, that was even stranger. It had actually been able to withstand the White Peak 13 Swords without a single scratch!

This was just too terrifying!

What the other sects' elders didn't know was that Mugu Buyu's Scarlet Gold Tortoise had managed to continuously withstand two strikes from Lin Ming's Purple Flood Dragon Divine Thunder, one of which was even mixed with the Evil Fire God's flame, creating a massive thunderflame explosion. Even then, it had only been slightly cracked.

In terms of defensive power, Mugu Buyu was the number one ranked among the entire younger generation of the Seven Profound Valleys, Lin Ming could not hold a candle to him. A True

Essence Force Field was a type of power of Law that was even above the Concept of Wind, and was one of the two ultimate legacy secret techniques of the Puppet Faction. Its reputation was well-earned.

Seeing Mugu Buyu's full combat potential, Jiang Baoyun let out a breath of cold air. 'His main body has near-absolute defense, and the Evil Fire God has irresistible attack power. Also, that alligator puppet has a devouring ability that can contain movements, causing any attack to be undodgeable. This multi-dimensional attack system from Mugu Buyu can almost be called perfect. Unfortunately, his opponent was Lin Ming, and all of this became useless. If I encountered him, I do not have absolute assurance that I could defeat him.'

In a sense, Mugu Buyu's ability to restrain an opponent's speed was able to suppress Jiang Baoyun. As for Lin Ming, his abnormal attack power was able to overwhelm the defense of Mugu Buyu. Therefore Lin Ming had been able to relatively easily defeat Mugu Buyu, and yet engage in an extended battle with Jiang Baoyun.

The Seven Profound Valleys deacons hurried on stage to lift up the unconscious Zhang Shaoshan and carry him down. The other sect elders and geniuses hadn't responded to the fight a moment ago. They were all individuals with outstanding eyesight. Naturally, they were able to see what the terrifying aspects of Mugu Buyu were.

Absolute defense, absolute attack! How could one break this near-perfect attack system?

Speed? Useless! Although Mugu Buyu was slow, he still had that strange alligator puppet that was able to restrain an opponent's speed. If an opponent couldn't display their speed, they could only wait to be struck.

Attack? Useless! Even the White Peak Sect's White Peak 13 Swords was useless. It hadn't even managed to leave a mark on that golden shell!

Defense? Useless! Although Zhang Shaoshan had poor defensive power, his sword technique was absolutely amazing. He had used his sword skills to defend against the Evil Fire God's attack, but was still defeated afterwards!

Who could be Mugu Buyu's match in the same level? Such a powerful Mugu Buyu was a nameless nobody? And he was only ranked third in the Seven Profound Valleys?

But, they all clearly remembered the words that Mugu Buyu had spoken to Zhang Shaoshan before the match.

"Let me play with you. If you can defeat me, then you might be able to take a few moves from this little boy's hand."

That so-called boy, was naturally Lin Ming!

"If you can defeat me..."

"Might be able..."

“To take a few moves...”

What Mugu Buyu’s words implied was that someone stronger than him would only be able to take a few moves from Lin Ming!

And yet, that Zhang Shaoshan was defeated by Mugu Buyu in five moves. In comparison to Lin Ming, that was simply the difference between cloud and mud!

# Chapter 298 – Convincing Strength

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Lin Ming. Early Pulse Condensation cultivation, 16 years old!

How did he defeat Mugu Buyu? And listening to the intent behind Mugu Buyu's words, not only was he not Lin Ming's match, but he was far surpassed by Lin Ming.

No one person thought that Mugu Buyu would lie. Mugu Buyu was such a talented genius, there was no way that he would frustrate his own spirit. Not only that, but there was no need to do so. It would be impossible for Divine Phoenix Island to do something so careless like designating Lin Ming as a heaven-step talent just because of some words from Mugu Buyu.

Then, the only explanation would be that Lin Ming truly was a terrifying presence.

Peacock Mountain's Lin Ping let out a long breath of air as he looked at Mugu Buyu. Naturally, he would be able to defeat Mugu Buyu by virtue of absolute suppression of power. But Lin Ming was only at the early Pulse Condensation period, how did he defeat him?

If Lin Ming was fierce at the early Pulse Condensation period, then what would happen if he reached the middle Pulse Condensation period, late Pulse Condensation period, or even stepped into the Houtian realm?

If that happened, maybe even Lin Ping himself wouldn't be able

to touch Lin Ming!

No wonder Divine Phoenix Island had chosen Lin Ming as a heaven-step talent. He was so young, yet he had such strength! This was the reason that he was the only heaven-step talent.

Lin Ping was simply speechless.

At this time, Lin Ming was quietly sitting in the arena. Because of his age, no one had the qualifications to challenge him. But after Mugu Buyu rolled over Zhang Shaoshan, there were even less people that wanted to challenge him. If it really came down to a battle, the only one present that could match Lin Ming was probably Lin Ping. As for everyone else, they were mostly at Jiang Baoyun's level; they would only be able to force out Lin Ming's full power.

At this time, Jiang Baoyun suddenly said to the youth with upturned eyebrows, "Senior-apprentice Brother, it's about time we enter the stage."

The youth with upturned eyebrows was surprised, and then immediately felt bitterness in his heart. He had been nervous and gone crazy in challenging Jiang Baoyun. Their match was immediately after Mugu Buyu and Zhang Shaoshan's!

The youth with upturned eyebrows gulped; his mouth dry as he was left speechless. He didn't believe for a moment that he would be a match for that mummy. And according to his information, Jiang Baoyun was someone who was even fiercer than that

mummy fellow!

Although the youth with upturned eyebrows was confident in his own abilities, he wasn't so confident as to think he could defeat such an abnormal character. If he went on stage, wouldn't he just be ruining himself?

But he was the third-ranked disciple of Falling Cloud Sect, and Falling Cloud Sect was one of the six top third-grade sects. How could he run away from a mere Seven Profound Valleys disciple?

But if he went on, he would be ruined, and most likely be abused into a shameless mess that would lose all face for his family.

Yet if he was timid, then people would say that he was so scared that he dared not go on stage. In that case, he would still lose face!

The youth with upturned eyebrows finally understood what it meant to jump on the tiger's back, unable to crawl down. This catastrophe had all been brought about by his own big and cheap mouth!

As he mulled over this dilemma, a cold voice suddenly said, "Junior-apprentice Brother Song, I will go."

The youth with upturned eyebrows turned around, seeing a white robed Bai Shuxuan standing behind him. Bai Shuxuan couldn't be considered a true beauty, but from top to bottom, her body gave off a soft and placid temperament just like still water.



When a person looked at her, it was easy to have an extremely favorable impression of her.

“Senior-apprentice Sister!” The youth with upturned eyebrows’ heart raced with ecstatic joy. His face was full of gratitude as he looked at Bai Shuxuan. Bai Shuxuan was the chief disciple of their Falling Cloud Sect, and her status was equal to Jiang Baoyun’s in the Seven Profound Valleys. She was also the absolute famed talent of her generation, and the fame of her strength was no less than Lin Ping’s.

Bai Shuxuan of Falling Cloud Sect and Lin Ping of Peacock Mountain were known as the Dragon and Phoenix Pair of the 19 third-grade sects. Lin Ping was a year older, and he had already stepped into the Houtian realm. As for Bai Shuxuan, she remained in the Pulse Condensation period, but she could break through at any time, she was only waiting for her true essence to flood over and make a natural breakthrough.

From the First Stage of Body Transformation to reaching the Houtian realm, one could only be considered a peerless talent and have such confidence if they make breakthroughs completely depending on natural flooding of true essence. Otherwise, if one’s talent was insufficient then they would die before their true essence ever naturally overflowed.

Jiang Baoyun had never challenged Bai Shuxuan; he had long ago planned to challenge this genius at some point. Now, this match just happened to align with his wishes.

“Senior-apprentice Sister Bai, I have heard great things about

you. Please advise!” Jiang Baoyun held his sword in a bowing ceremony, he held a great deal of admiration for Bai Shuxuan.

“Please!”

This battle of masters immediately attracted everyone’s attention, even Falling Cloud Sect’s elder sat up straight in his seat. Bai Shuxuan was their chief disciple. If she lost to Jiang Baoyun, then their Falling Cloud would truly be embarrassed. For better or for worse, Falling Cloud Sect was still a top third-grade sect that had a 1500 year history. Whether it was legacies or heritage, they far surpassed the 600 year old Seven Profound Valleys.

As the match began, Jiang Baoyun took out both his blue and black swords at the start, and then summoned his Sword Spirit Avatar. Facing Bai Shuxuan, he dared not take any chances.

Sword light flashed, and the two began to test each other with a few moves. But in an instant, their speed rose to the extreme!

Bai Shuxuan’s speed was actually no slower than Jiang Baoyun’s! It had to be known that Jiang Baoyun had comprehended his own Sword Step. As for Bai Shuxuan, she didn’t know a Sword Step, but it seems as if her body had fused into her sword shadow, using this strange movement technique to move around the stage. With this, she was no slower than Jiang Baoyun!

“So fierce!”

Lin Ming's eyes flashed. If Lin Ming could be said to have a weakness, then that would be facing someone with a speed more extreme than his own. When this happened, his reaction speed would become his weakness. Against near-instant melee attacks that were as fast as sound, he wasn't able to respond. He could only integrate the coiling dragon steel needle into his body and release it at a critical moment to repel his opponent.

This approach may have seemed like Lin Ming's trick, but it wasn't his true ability.

“My weakness is speed... I didn't think that even though I comprehended the Concept of Wind, my speed still wouldn't be enough. Although Golden Roc Shattering the Void is an incomparably powerful movement martial skill, that was due to it being created and utilized by a Supreme Elder. The Concept of the Golden-winged Roc is incomparably vast and profound. In my current state, all I've comprehended is just a drop in the ocean. Not just that, but Golden Roc Shattering the Void actually contains two different concepts: the Concept of Wind and the Concept of Space. I understand the barest basic knowledge of the Concept of Wind, but I still cannot display the full power of Golden Roc Shattering the Void. I have to make up for this deficit in speed as soon as possible.”

On the martial stage, there were already countless after-shadows, and the dense sword light was like a woven network of dazzling sparkles. In such a battle, even among the geniuses present, there were still some weaker ones who weren't able to fully follow the footsteps of these two individuals.

“Sword Shattering Clear Sky!”

Jiang Baoyun’s aura erupted, his sword potential violently surged!

He finally used his strongest skill, this was the Sword Faction’s ultimate secret technique that was driven by his own Sword Spirit!

When Jiang Baoyun and Lin Ming had fought, Jiang Baoyun had used this move as his final strike. When he collided with Lin Ming, they had been evenly matched in power. This showed just how strong this ability was.

Moreover, Lin Ming also knew that Jiang Baoyun’s sword contained a soul attack, using the Sword Spirit as the weapon in the soul attack. When this soul attack had rushed into Lin Ming’s spiritual sea, it had an extremely lethal murderous intent to it. How would Bai Shuxuan block this?

Bai Shuxuan also became aware of just how strong Jiang Baoyun’s sword strike was. Her body flashed with a white light, and rings upon rings of water ripples condensed around her body.

“Water Veil Lotus!”

In that moment, Bai Shuxuan was surrounded by pure water origin energy.

“Mm? Concept of Water?”

Bai Shuxuan's degree of comprehension of the Concept of Water was obviously much more deep and profound than Jiang Lanjian's Concept of Wind!

These talents truly did have their own skill.

Pop!

The Water Veil Lotus broke apart, mist drifting everywhere in the sky. But Jiang Baoyun's strongest strike had also been blocked; the protection of the water veil was actually able to defend against the soul attack. This caused Lin Ming to be extremely startled.

The two drew back several steps, both of their faces pale. Obviously, they had suffered some minor wounds, and these might have even been soul wounds.

A soul wound was no trifling matter. Even a small amount of soul damage would take a long period of time to mend, and one had to be very careful. Once the soul left the protection of the spiritual sea, it was as vulnerable as a little baby in a snowstorm.

"Enough! This match is considered a draw!"

Mu Qianyu suddenly spoke up from her seat of honor. As she spoke, a strange and harmonious true essence fluctuation followed her voice. To those who heard it, it was inspiring like a pleasant spring breeze.

On the martial stage, Jiang Baoyun and Bai Shuxuan were surrounded by these true essence fluctuations. They only felt a very nice and warm sensation, just like huddling around a warm stove in the middle of winter. Their shivering souls were suddenly brimming with vitality.

This caused the two of them to be very startled. They knew that Mu Qianyu was a fire-attribute martial artist, but they had only ever thought that fire origin energy could be used in an offensive manner. But Mu Qianyu had actually used the fire origin energy to heal their wounds. Obviously, her understanding of Fire Laws had reached an unfathomably profound degree!

“This is good.” The Falling Cloud Sect elder’s forehead was dripping with sweat. By watching the battle, he could see that Jiang Baoyun was no weaker than Bai Shuxuan. However, this was not what had horrified him. As the fight continued, he was able to discover to his amazement that Jiang Baoyun’s sword actually contained a soul attack. Not only that, but looking at his appearance, it didn’t seem as if he had good control over it. If Bai Shuxuan’s soul had been injured, she would have been finished.

A soul wound was one of the most difficult kinds of wounds to treat and heal. To those who cultivated the sword, their perception was their most important aspect. Once the spiritual sea was damaged, a swordsman would basically become useless. Bai Shuxuan was the treasure of their Falling Cloud Sect. If she was ruined by an incurable soul wound just because of a little martial arts match, then he would really grieve to the point of having no tears.

Shi Zongtian also let out a long breath of relief. The strengths of these two individuals was about the same. But, Jiang Baoyun was younger than Bai Shuxuan by several months. So Jiang Baoyun's talent could be considered to be even better!

After this, there was no one else who dared to object to the list of names that were crafted by Divine Phoenix Island. The Seven Profound Valleys was just too abnormal. First, there was some unknown mummy fellow named Mugu Buyu who had rolled over Zhang Shaoshan, and there was even a Jiang Baoyun who was on par with Falling Cloud Sect's greatest talent!

Lin Ming was even stronger than these two, and he was only 16 years of age. With such talent, nobody dared to question why he was the only designated heaven-step talent.

As for those 30 earth-step talents, they accepted that they would rush through the Seven Treasures Exquisite Pagoda to decide which ones of them would enter the earth-step, and which ones of them would fall to the human-step talent rankings.

Of course, none of this mattered to Lin Ming.

"If there are no more objections, then this meeting shall come to an end. Everyone may return!" Mu Qianyu stood up as she said this, and then beckoned towards Lin Ming, saying, "Lin Ming, you stay behind."

"Yes, Saintess Your Highness."

In such a large crowd of people, Lin Ming maintained his respectful manners. Why had Mu Qianyu told him to stay behind?

Seeing that Lin Ming would stay behind alone with Mu Qianyu, this matter immediately attracted the attention of all the other geniuses. They didn't need to be geniuses to know that this was some good thing, and also a form of special treatment. But still, besides envying, what else could they do?

Their ability was less than others, there was nothing they could do!

At this time, Zhang Shaoshan had just woken up after having eaten some pills. Seeing that Lin Ming would stay behind with Mu Qianyu, he almost fainted with anger again on scene.



## Chapter 299 – Heaven Opening Pill In Hand

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The reason why Zhang Shaoshan was so madly envious of Lin Ming wasn't just the additional resources that were available to him, but because of the attitude that Mu Qianyu had towards Lin Ming. Even Zhang Shaoshan clearly knew that whether now or in the future, Mu Qianyu would have absolutely no relation to him. This caused his antipathy to rise to the skies!

Those who went against their true nature would damage their heart of martial arts. Every person's true nature was decided by their conscience. For instance, those righteous individuals like Jiang Baoyun and Qin Wuxin followed the noble and virtuous path. If they did something evil, such as plotting against others, treachery, betrayal, or other malicious actions, this would go against their nature, inevitably ruining their heart of martial arts.

But as for those like the Acacia Faction and the South Sea Demon Region, these kinds of martial artists followed the immoral, wicked path. They placed emphasis on indulging in their most basic desires and fulfilling all of their dark ideas. If they were to behave and be goodly like some holy monk, then that also would go against their nature.

Zhang Shaoshan was an individual who had a very heavy and proud heart, and was also narrow-minded with a low tolerance level. He loved to step on others, but if someday he were to be disgraced and stepped on by someone else, this would frustrate his spirit and thoughts, blocking his cultivation.

As of now, Zhang Shaoshan was in this situation. In front of

everyone, he had been repeatedly stepped on. Although the person who had done this was Mugu Buyu, Zhang Shaoshan had also counted Lin Ming as one of his heart's thorns. He had even linked in Jiang Baoyun, bearing a deep grudge against all three of them.

‘Just you wait, I will have you pay the price for shaming me!’

Zhang Shaoshan clenched his teeth, and was finally carried away.

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“Lin Ming, this is for you.” Mu Qianyu turned her hands, and a sparkling, translucent pill bottle and a ring appeared in her hands. The pill bottle was made from exquisite jade, and was beautiful just like the whitest crystal. As for the ring, it was very plain, looking no different to a copper or steel ring.

But Lin Ming was able to recognize that this ring was actually a high-grade human-step spatial ring.

It wasn't an easy task to forge a spatial ring. Because of this, a spatial ring was often much more expensive than a treasure of the same grade. This spatial ring might not be as valuable as a weak earth-step treasure, but it wasn't too different.

Mu Qianyu smiled and said, “The true essence stones inside the ring are yours. There are 240 of them, I'm giving you these resources ahead of time so you can cultivate.”

Hearing the number 240, Lin Ming was overjoyed. These true essence stones that Mu Qianyu had passed to him were naturally medium-grade true essence stones. A single medium-grade true essence stone was worth 100 normal true essence stones, meaning that these 240 medium-grade true essence stones were worth 24,000 ordinary pure true essence stones! Also, it wasn't easy to trade for medium-grade true essence stones; the true value of them was probably much higher than he thought.

To use medium-grade true essence stones to cultivate was a luxury that not even the core disciples of the Seven Profound Valleys could enjoy.

“I'll use these 240 medium-grade true essence stones to cultivate. As for those other true essence stones that I won through the gambling house, I'll use those as currency to buy items.”

Lin Ming planned to use the true essence stones with this intention. But, the true essence stones seemed to have become a bit heavier. If he only used medium-grade true essence stones to cultivate, 240 wouldn't be enough. As for the ordinary true essence stones, those would quickly be spent if he wished to purchase some top quality materials.

“Thank you, Saintess Your Highness.”

Because Shi Zongtian was also present, Lin Ming didn't show any surprise or knowledge of what he knew was in Mu Qianyu's hands, and respectfully received the pill bottle and spatial ring.

“This spatial ring is also for you. I see that your spatial ring is some low-grade treasure, it’s best to change it.” Mu Qianyu casually said. Lin Ming hesitated for a moment but didn’t decline. After all, this was part of the ceremony.

Previously, he had taken three medium-grade human-step spatial rings from the bodies of Huo Gong, Ouyang Dihua, and the Allied Trade Association’s President Zhang Fengxian. But he never showed these rings to the light of day or wore them on his hand.

With this high-grade human-step spatial ring, he would be able to destroy those three spatial rings he got from killing others.

A high-grade human-step spatial ring had an inner dimensional capacity that was larger than all of Lin Ming’s total rings combined. Not only that, but it was much more stable and could last for thousands of years without collapsing.

After Mu Qianyu handed over the Heaven Opening Pill, Shi Zongtian also took out a vivid red pill box. After opening it, there was a crystal clear emerald pill inside, the size of a longan. It shined with an incomparably pure origin energy – this was also a Heaven Opening Pill.

This was the reward for being the champion of this year’s Total Faction Martial Meeting. Shi Zongtian had already promised to deliver the prize to Lin Ming ahead of time; this was the most convenient time to settle this matter.

Lin Ming took a deep breath. Out of nowhere, he had suddenly

obtained two Heaven Opening Pills. This was simply an unthinkable dream to most martial artists. For instance, Qin Ziya had paid such a great price and so much time for a Heaven Opening Pill. With this alone, one could imagine how precious they were.

Lin Ming's heart stirred and he asked, "Valley Master Shi, if I take a Heaven Opening Pill whilst at the Pulse Condensation period, will there be any side effects?"

Shi Zongtian's mouth twitched. Was this boy actually thinking of eating a Heaven Opening Pill during the Pulse Condensation period? This was just a waste of such a precious treasure!

As far as most martial artists were concerned, taking a Heaven Opening Pill was their life's grandest and most solemn event. There were even those who prepared for decades for this! They would cultivate until their cultivation couldn't rise even a tiny bit more, and they would wait until their Zither Heart or Sword Heart or whatever else had reached its own bottleneck. Finally, they would go into seclusion and swallow the Heaven Opening Pill. Earlier, if Qin Ziya hadn't been worried about failing to break through to the Xiantian realm due to his 50 years of age and low chance of ever receiving another Heaven Opening Pill, causing a problem with his Zither Heart, then he would most likely have broken through.

Most martial artists would hold a series of rituals before they took the Heaven Opening Pill. They would choose an auspicious date and bathe in incense. Afterwards, they might even stay in seclusion for over a year to refine all of the medicine and not let a single bit go to waste.

But Lin Ming, he was actually thinking of taking a Heaven Opening Pill with his Pulse Condensation period cultivation, treating these treasures like candy.

If those peak Houtian realm masters who could never step into the Xiantian realm because they lacked a Heaven Opening Pill heard this, they would probably go mad with rage and spit out several liters of blood.

Shi Zongtian coughed and said, “Lin Ming, although there aren’t any side effects from taking the Heaven Opening Pill during the Pulse Condensation period, you won’t be able to avoid wasting much of the efficacy due to your cultivation. You should consider reaching the Houtian realm before taking it, its effects will be better then.”

“I understand.” Lin Ming only heard Shi Zongtian say that there wouldn’t be side effects. As for wasting efficacy of the medicine, that simply wasn’t even in his consideration. What he wanted to attack first wasn’t the Houtian realm or even the Xiantian realm, but the Tempering Marrow boundary!

If he could open the Eight Inner Hidden Gates and the Nine Stars of the Dao Palace, he would be far superior to anyone else in the Xiantian realm or Revolving Core realm!

‘Of these two Heaven Opening Pills, it should be fine for me to take one now. Then I can see if the Heaven Opening Pill is enough to satisfy the lowest requirements of the ‘Chaotic Virtues Combat

Meridians' to help reach the Pulse Condensation Tempering Marrow boundary!

‘If eating one doesn’t work so well, then I will spend a massive amount of energy to draw up a medicinal inscription symbol so that I can inscribe onto the Heaven Opening Pill! If I add a medicinal inscription symbol to the Heaven Opening Pill and take it again, it should be good!’

As Lin Ming’s cultivation and power increased by bounds and leaps, his own inscription technique had fallen behind too much.

Practicing inscription technique required a great deal of time and energy. When Lin Ming had been poor and had no resources, he had no choice but to invest a massive amount of time in practicing inscription techniques, and use those inscription symbols he drew up to trade for cultivation resources. But as his status grew higher and higher, he no longer had to waste his time to trade for resources, but was able to invest all of his time into cultivating.

The most recent time that Lin Ming had used inscription techniques was when he was exchanging the symbols he drew for materials for his body inscription symbol. At that time, Lin Ming had drawn up inscription symbols for Sky Fortune Kingdom’s Pulse Condensation and Houtian masters for their medium-grade human-step weapons.

Since he was only able to draw up inscription symbols for medium-grade human-step treasures, Lin Ming could only be considered a medium-grade human-step inscription master.

But the Heaven Opening Pill rank was about equal to an earth-step pill; it was a sudden rise of two grades in difficulty. If Lin Ming wanted to draw up a medicinal inscription symbol that could pair up with the Heaven Opening Pill, he would need to at least achieve a low-grade earth-step ability in inscription technique. This would again take a massive amount of time and energy.

But, if this method could really help him enter into the Tempering Marrow boundary, then it was all worth it.

At this time, Shi Zongtian asked, “Lin Ming, have you chosen what earth-step treasure you would like?”

Lin Ming shook his head, “Not yet.”

“Mm? Liu Xuan hasn’t brought you to the Treasure Pavilion?”

“He did, it’s just that the spears within the Treasure Pavilion do not suit me.” Lin Ming tactfully said, carefully considering the words and expressions to use so as not to be rude.

“Ha!” Shi Zongtian laughed. If nothing was suitable, that just meant Lin Ming didn’t take a fancy to any of his Seven Profound Valleys’ earth-step treasure spears.

Shi Zongtian glanced at Liu Xuan who was responsible for the Treasure Pavilion. After Liu Xuan had brought Lin Ming here, he had gone to stand at a corner in the square. Shi Zongtian smiled



and used a true essence sound transmission to beckon him over.

“Liu Xuan, what’s wrong, your Refiner Faction’s Treasure Pavilion doesn’t even have a single decent spear?”

Liu Xuan forced a smile. He was still a Xiantian master and had a very acute sense of hearing. Shi Zongtian hadn’t bothered to conceal the conversation he had with Lin Ming, Liu Xuan had heard every bit of it. It was just that the Seven Profound Valleys didn’t have any masters who forged spears, so where would a high quality earth-step treasure spear come from?

Liu Xuan honestly said, “Apprentice Nephew Lin wishes for a flexible spear. However, our Treasure Pavilion only has three earth-step spears, all of which are hard spears. Not only that, but they are of quite ordinary quality. However, Apprentice Nephew Lin has said that he can provide spear crafting materials if we can forge it for him.”

As Liu Xuan said this, he cast a somewhat doubtful look towards Lin Ming. In Liu Xuan’s opinion, with Lin Ming’s common mortal background and young age, it was unlikely for him to understand how difficult it was to refine treasures, especially earth-step treasures. He probably had some low-quality common materials that he thought could be used to refine an earth-step treasure.

However, this wasn’t related to him. Since Shi Zongtian had asked, he had truthfully spoken.

The fact was, Liu Xuan was a tiny bit annoyed by Lin Ming. After

all, the Treasure Pavilion could be said to be equivalent to his Refining Faction. There were many disciples who vainly dreamed and hoped to one day enter and choose a treasure. But Lin Ming hadn't taken a liking to any of the treasures inside. It had to be known that there were many martial artists, that from the very first time they cultivated martial artists to the point when they reached the Xiantian realm, would never have had a chance to touch an earth-step treasure!

“Oh?” Shi Zongtian's eyes picked up. Lin Ming actually had materials to make a flexible spear? But the materials that were qualified to craft an earth-step flexible spear were rare and exceedingly difficult to find. “What sort of materials do you have?”

“It's only the spear shaft material. As for the spearhead material, I do not have any.”

“The spear shaft is enough. When making a flexible spear, the spear shaft is the most important part. Also, the materials to craft an earth-step flexible spear's shaft are very rare. Lin Ming, do you really have any something?” Shi Zongtian actually did believe Lin Ming to an extent. After all, he was certain that Lin Ming had experienced some great fortuitous opportunity.

“It's a piece of bamboo...” Lin Ming said, and then pulled the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo from his spatial ring. The nine foot nine inch Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo was a deep vivid color, and it sparkled with electric flashes.

Liu Xuan was directly befuddled, just what was this?

# Chapter 300 – Spear Refining Grandmaster

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The truth was that even though Liu Xuan only had a very shallow experience of these materials, Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo was simply an exceedingly rare treasure. It could only be formed at special locations which had experienced powerful thunder for 10,000 years. The commoners who lived around Thundercrash Mountain in the Southern Wilderness had a much broader knowledge of the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo, as they were more closely intertwined with that environment.

In addition, Liu Xuan was a refining master whose specialty was forging swords and sabers. He understood almost every kind of top quality metal, but as for bamboo and other types of wood like materials, he almost never used them.

However, even though Liu Xuan didn't know much about the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo, that didn't stop him from being able to see the terrifying power of thunder that was emitting from this piece of bamboo.

As the bamboo appeared, an incomparably rich power of thunder flooded outwards. The flashes of electricity were even enough to force Liu Xuan to subconsciously step backwards, and make all of the hairs on his body stand. This bamboo was still able to cause this effect, even though Liu Xuan was protected by his powerful true essence; obviously the thunder created a very formidable electricity field.

And what startled Liu Xuan was that he was able to see that the power of thunder origin energy of the world was flowing into this

stick of bamboo, forming an invisible whirlpool of origin energy.

‘It can independently absorb thunder origin energy?’

This was simply incredible. If a thunder-attribute martial artist had this stick of bamboo, then he could continuously absorb thunder origin energy from the world during a battle in order to supplement his own reserves. Not only would his moves be more powerful, but he would have greater endurance in combat.

Realizing this, Liu Xuan gulped, his throat twitching. This bamboo was absolutely a treasure material that all thunder-attribute martial artists longed for in their dreams!

Among the three present, the one who best understood Thundercrash Mountain was Mu Qianyu. With just a glance, she was able to recognize this piece of Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo, and was also able to discern just where Lin Ming got it from.

‘I didn’t think that the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo that has been bred in Thundercrash Mountain for 10,000 years was actually obtained by him. It seems that his little sojourn into the Flood Dragon Cave really had a rich harvest.’ Thinking this, Mu Qianyu grinned as she shook her head. The wealth that the Thunder Flood Dragon had accumulated was actually all plucked away by Lin Ming.

Shi Zongtian’s experience couldn’t compare to Mu Qianyu’s. After he saw this Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo, he pondered for a moment before suddenly remembering that long ago, he had read

about this sort of spiritual bamboo in the ancient texts.

“This is Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo?” Shi Zongtian asked.

Lin Ming nodded.

“Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo grows one inch every 100 years. This piece is nearly 10 feet tall. Is it 10,000 year old Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo?”

“Nine feet nine inches, it is 9900 year old Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo. It also birthed a 900 year old young bamboo shoot that is in my possession.” Lin Ming said, not bothering to conceal anything.

Nine feet nine inches was the same length as the Heavy Profound Soft Spear. However, the Heavy Profound Soft Spear’s length also included the spear head.

If one were to forge a spear with the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo, it would also have another foot long spearhead. Its final length would be more than 10 feet long. In truth, this was a bit too long.

After hearing Lin Ming’s affirmation, Shi Zongtian sucked in a deep breath of air. This young boy had actually managed to obtain this sort of rare material. Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo could only be found in lands of thunder. As for lands of thunder, the only place nearby would be Thundercrash Mountain!

It was said that a Thunder Flood Dragon lived at the summit of Thundercrash Mountain, with a profoundly deep cultivation. Not only that, but it had the bloodline of a Saint Beast. Its strength was unfathomable. Coupled with the help of the countless Thunder Lizards that lived on Thundercrash Mountain, even the highest elder of the Seven Profound Valleys wouldn't be able to return unscathed. And Lin Ming was actually able to obtain this Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo from Thundercrash Mountain?

Shi Zongtian found this impossible to imagine. He subconsciously glanced at Mu Qianyu. Did Mu Qianyu help Lin Ming? If so, then Mu Qianyu was simply too good to Lin Ming. Shi Zongtian thought for a moment, and then began to reevaluate the relationship between Mu Qianyu and Lin Ming. Maybe their relationship wasn't as simple as he had imagined...

Even that Thunder Soul might have only been absorbed with help from Mu Qianyu. Otherwise, how could a young boy who didn't even have a Pulse Condensation cultivation possibly absorb a low-grade earth-step Thunder Soul?

As Shi Zongtian thought more and more, he realized that the Seven Profound Valleys wouldn't be able to retain a talent like Lin Ming. He was simply a dragon with a deep pool, and the waters of the Seven Profound Valleys were too shallow – a True Dragon could not swim in their waters.

Also, Lin Ming didn't have an average connection to Mu Qianyu. Him joining Divine Phoenix Island was only a matter of time...

Thinking this, Shi Zongtian let out a long breath. Before, he had struggled with his thoughts and decisions. Lin Ming had never been his, and couldn't be considered as a Seven Profound Valleys disciple from the start.

In that case, drawing back and looking at things, befriending such a master was also good.

“I would like to use this Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo to forge a spear!”

Lin Ming solemnly said as he held out the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo.

Liu Xuan's eyes jumped as he heard this. Make a spear shaft with this bamboo? This... this was just too shocking an idea. If one could create an earth-step treasure spear, with the added quality from the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo of being able to absorb and strengthen the power of thunder, then that spear would be a highest quality weapon for any thunder-attribute martial artist!

‘Yes! Wasn't Lin Ming a thunder-attribute martial artist?’ Liu Xuan slapped his forehead, cursing himself for being so stupid. He had actually forgotten that Lin Ming was a thunder-attribute martial artist with an absurdly high thunder origin energy fusion compatibility!

As Liu Xuan thought this, his mind began to shiver. This was incredible! Lin Ming was already disgustingly strong to such a degree, but if he also had a top quality thunder spear, he would be

even more powerful. With his power unleashed, who among the younger generation could hope to stop him?

No wonder Lin Ming didn't even spare a glance at the treasures of the Refiner Faction. In comparison to a top quality thunder spear that was made from Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo, those weapons within the Treasure Pavilion were nothing more than scrap iron!

Shi Zongtian's eyes also jumped. Lin Ming's strength was just becoming increasingly terrifying. Perhaps in one year, even Peacock Mountain's Lin Ping might not be his match... it might even be less than a year!

He turned and looked at Liu Xuan, saying, "Liu Xuan, who within the Refiner Faction is best at forging spears?"

As Liu Xuan heard this question, he suddenly flushed red, looking helpless. Although there really were a few elders within the Refiner Faction who could forge spears, the best they could make were high-grade human-step treasure spears. To let them use the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo would simply be a waste.

Liu Xuan still remembered that he had just suspected Lin Ming of not understanding how difficult refining was, and not having any materials to craft an earth-step treasure. But now, Lin Ming had actually put out a more than adequate material, but there wasn't anyone who could use it. Liu Xuan could only ruefully smile.

Liu Xuan helplessly shook his head, looking somewhat



embarrassed. He said, “Our Refiner Faction simply cannot forge an earth-step treasure spear... the most we can craft is an earth-step treasure spearhead. For instance, a Cold Star Iron spearhead...

Cold Star Iron was a top quality metal material used to make earth-step treasures. The use of Cold Star Iron to create treasures was a very arduous and complicated process, and was also one of the legacy techniques of the Seven Profound Valleys’ Refiner Faction. It was a strictly confidential technique that was absolutely forbidden for outsiders. However, it was also the process they were most proud and confident in, thus Liu Xuan had suggested this.

But, Liu Xuan didn’t think that Mu Qianyu would shake her head and say, “Cold Star Iron can only create up to a low-grade earth-step treasure, and 10,000 year old Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo is far beyond that. A spearhead made from Cold Star Iron does not match well with Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo. Not only that, but if the spearhead is created separately from the spear shaft, then the spear will be unable to merge into one natural whole, and the quality of the end product would suffer greatly.”

Mu Qianyu calmly spoke a statement of facts. As Liu Xuan heard this, he immediately reddened. He had actually suggested one of his Refiner Faction’s most precious legacy secret techniques, but yet in just a few demeaning words from Mu Qianyu, it had become worthless within her eyes...

He opened his mouth to speak, but couldn’t find the words to refute her. In the end, he didn’t say anything, there was simply nothing he could use as a rebuttal. This was the gap in their sects’ heritages. A dignified top fourth-grade sect would of course look

down on their so-called secret technique.

Mu Qianyu said, “Lin Ming, I actually know a spear refining master whose cultivation is at the middle Revolving Core realm. If he can be found, then the full power of the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo can be displayed. Of course, this is only if you can afford the other materials that can match the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo in order to craft the spearhead.”

A middle Revolving Core realm spear refining master?

As Lin Ming heard Mu Qianyu, his heart rate suddenly increased. The Sovereign of the Seven Profound Valleys’ Refiner Faction only had cultivation at the late Xiantian realm. Just from cultivation only, one could imagine how much stronger a spear made by this spear refining master would be.

However, thinking that Mu Qianyu also said that he needed to provide materials that matched the Violet Electricity Spirit Bamboo, Lin Ming was somewhat depressed. The value of these materials could be imagined. Even if he put forth all of his possessions, he would not be able to afford it.

Unless, he reached out his beggar hand towards Mu Qianyu.

If Mu Qianyu was willing to pay the price, then she could of course obtain these materials. But, there was no reason that Mu Qianyu would help him for no return.

Even if he was a genius, he still hadn't fully matured. There was no reason for Mu Qianyu to repeatedly give out such precious resources to him.

No one could say what would happen in the future. Also, he wasn't even a Divine Phoenix Island disciple.

Mu Qianyu saw Lin Ming's somewhat despondent expression and was able to imagine what he was thinking about. She faintly smiled and asked, "Lin Ming, don't you want to see this spear refining master?"

"I would like to, but..."

"Then come with me." As Mu Qianyu said this, she clapped her hands, and a strange fluctuation of fire true essence spread from her palms. Soon, a faint phoenix cry resounded, and a giant bird with a 70 foot long wingspan flew down towards the Grand Hall, landing in front of the square.

The bird had the head of a golden pheasant, a long neck like a snake, and feathers that burned like brilliant flames of the sun. This was Mu Qianyu's life's Vermillion Bird, Little Flame.

Little Flame landed on the ground, and an incomparably scorching wave of heat burned the atmosphere. Lin Ming – and even the early Xiantian realm Liu Xuan – couldn't help but take several steps back.

Lin Ming stimulated the Heretical God Seed within his body, finally able to stand firm against the burning heat waves that emanated from Little Flame. This fellow had evolved?

Lin Ming remembered that when he first saw Little Flame, Little Flame only had a wingspan of 50 feet. Now, it already had a wingspan of 70 feet, and the fire true essence that percolated around its body seemed much more formidable.

At this point, Little Flame proudly stretched back its wings, preening as it raised its phoenix beak in a self-satisfied gesture, demonstrating its noble and elegant bearing. Obviously, it was quite happy seeing the shock in Lin Ming's eyes.

Little Flame was naturally able to recognize Lin Ming. Or, it was more accurate to say that Little Flame was able to recognize the barbecue boy.

“Let's go.” Mu Qianyu lightly tapped her toes, jumping into the air and falling gently onto Little Flame's back like a feather. She motioned for Lin Ming to follow her.

Lin Ming paused, he could sit on Little Flame's back? Would Little Flame let him?

Shi Zongtian and Liu Xuan were also incomparably startled. How arrogant and proud was a Saint Beast? Not everyone was qualified to sit on its back.

Sure enough, Little Flame let out a few discontented chirps. But, it was only a few chirps, it still allowed Lin Ming to climb up.

This was mainly because it was Mu Qianyu's order. But Lin Ming's status as the barbecue boy also played a major role.

Lin Ming tapped his feet, soaring into the air and steadily falling onto Little Flame's back. Liu Xuan couldn't help but swallow a mouthful of saliva as he saw this. As a disciple of the Refining Faction, he was also a fire-attribute martial artist. Seeing Lin Ming being able to ride such a majestic fire-attribute Saint Beast, he could only feel extreme envy in his heart.